

# LOST CONTINENT LIBRARY

MAGAZINE

## SECRET OF THE INCAS:

*Charlton Heston's  
Adventure Legacy—  
Inspiration for  
Indiana Jones?*

*A CLASSIC ADVENTURE  
RETURNS!*



**ERIC EVICK W. MICHAEL MOTT BILL CRAIG**

## PREMIER ISSUE

# LOST CONTINENT LIBRARY Magazine

*"Where Adventure Lives Forever!"*

VOLUME ONE Issue Number 1

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Graphics & Layout

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Distribution: E-mail and internet.

Submissions: [lostcontinentlib3@yahoo.com](mailto:lostcontinentlib3@yahoo.com)

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ADVENTURE.  
PURE...  
AND SIMPLY  
DANGEROUS

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# CHIEF'S LOG

I write this from the exotic western locale of California, land of my birth, welcoming you all to the first issue of a magazine that has been too long coming.

First envisioned five years ago in the far off Nile city of Khartoum, this magazine has finally arrived. That first vision was inspired by a love for golden age adventure and the desire to preserve a great genre for generations to come.

It was to be a grand venture, printed on pulp paper and featuring articles on Burroughs, Mundy, Frazetta, Merian C. Cooper and the like. That was when ambition kicked in and, while driving alone amid the mud houses of Omdurman, I decided to publish books. Inspired by the model of my friend, David Hatcher Childress, I began publishing golden age adventure fiction and accomplished five printed titles, a few electronic titles and a graphic novel, part of which is presented in this issue. But the idea of the magazine is where it started and that concept has always nudged at me over the years, even as I watched the icy Hindu Kush roll by, or pondered the mystery of lost worlds high in the Andes.

I intended its debut months ago. However, it now seems fitting to present this magazine at Christmas.

My gift to the die-hard adventure fans.

Welcome to the jungle!

-- *Editor-in-Chief*

# FIELD CABLES

In future issues, this will be the section where we'll run letters and our replies to your questions and comments. Ask us anything, but please **STAY ON TOPIC**: Classic 'Golden Age' style adventure, fantasy and western fiction, movies, television and radio. Remember, anything in those genres of the style prior to 1950, whether it was written then or yesterday. We really look forward to hearing from the readers and fans.

So please, send in those letters for the upcoming issues:

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# 'SHE' WHO MUST BE SEEN!

A Great Adventure Film Breathes New Life



In 1935, Merian C. Cooper, creator and producer of the great original KING KONG(1933), released what would become a rather obscure adventure classic based upon an H. Rider Haggard novel, 'SHE'. The film starred Randolph Scott, Nigel Bruce, Helen Gahagan and Helen Mack, the love interest of Carl Denham in 'SON OF KONG'. Some of the set pieces were from KING KONG, including the famous wall, serving this time out as the entrance to the hidden world of the far north. Even the music seems familiar, as Max Steiner once again provided a great rousing score.

I first saw this film just a few years ago when I found a budget edition DVD and took it with me on a trip outside the US. I had seen the remake starring Ursula Andress, and the sequel, both from the 1960s. It was a great discovery.

In the novel, the hidden city is located in Africa. The filmmakers effectively transferred the location of Ayesha's realm to the far north. Enthusiasts of the Hollow Earth theory and the legends associated with it will be thrilled. The adventurers journey beyond the ice barrier to the habitable and somewhat temperate zone hidden from the rest of the world. Randolph Scott plays the man whose ancestor journeyed there and never returned. He embarks north with Nigel Bruce, his uncle's partner in science, as they seek the secret to an elemental flame that burns hotter than anything known to man. Together they make their way across the barrier, in spite of avalanches and a wily



prospector whose ill-treated daughter takes up with the expedition. Ultimately, in the cavern world of savages bent on sacrificing them, the adventurers are saved by denizens of Ayesha's world, who take them to her city in a lush tropical paradise at the top of the world.

The rest of the story you'll have to see. It involves Ayesha herself, young and vibrant, and very much interested in the young Leo Vincey (Randolph Scott) because he is the very image of his ancestor – the man Ayesha fell in love with four hundred years before!

What makes this film a classic must-see are the trappings. You start with the midnight arrival of the young hero to the laboratory where his dying uncle tells the tale of his missing ancestor and the mysterious flame. Then you're transported to the 'northernmost rim' of the world where the heroes meet the cynical, scruffy prospector, and their conversation under the lamplight conjures many a night around the campfire when strange tales are told. What follows is the trek across the arctic to the majestic, massive ice barrier that separates the known world from the mystery of the north. By the time the heroes have found the cavern savages, the viewer is pretty much drawn into full suspension of disbelief. You can actually believe they would be brought to a hidden tropical land beyond the caverns, and the city itself is realized sufficiently in grand Hollywood style. Though different from the book, this version works quite well.

Naturally, the 1935 original was filmed in black and white. I watched my DVD several times, noticing there were some details that just didn't seem to stand out clearly, especially a scene featuring something frozen inside ice. When you love old movies, you appreciate black and white and forgive quite a lot. This is a great old movie and the black and white stands as a great collectible.

But then I went to Comic Con in Summer 2006 and there saw the preview of the colorized version to be released by Legend Films.

I was astonished!

The detail was transformative. Suddenly this formerly old black and white film showed depth and detail the original version just could not achieve. Simply by the addition of the color, SHE breathed new life. The actors seemed more alive, the sets more detailed, the locations and effects more believable. The editing of the preview was contemporary in style, and with the color added, it was almost as if someone had produced a new movie to look like an old one. What makes it work are the choices in color: sepia-tinged skin tones, earth tones, deep rich blues, shimmering golds. It's not like the colorization of twenty years ago, nor is it soft-focused like SKY CAPTAIN. The finished product works with the visual factors that exist within the film, a lot of torch light, lantern light, dim light and shadow. It simply works beautifully with the content, lending to a most satisfying visual experience.

If you love old adventure films, this colorized SHE must become part of your collection. The special features include interviews with and a bio on Ray Harryhausen who participated in the colorization process. You'll also get the stunning colorized previews of SHE and other great old films.

SHE has inspired a couple of remakes, dozens of adventure stories about beautiful but ruthless women in power, and even a Lost Continent Library novel, 'Secret of the Amazon Queen' by E.A. Guest, a racy adult take on the premise of 'SHE, WHO MUST BE OBEYED' the great adventure classic by H. Rider Haggard.

SHE(1935)(2006 color version by Legend Films, from Genius Entertainment) is available where DVDs are sold.

-- WALTER BOSLEY



Classic adventure all the time!

Available at AUP!



## “SECRET OF THE INCAS”

Charlton Heston’s Adventure Film Legacy

By  
**Walter Bosley**

When I was a kid, my father took our family to the drive-in movie theater about every weekend. I grew up on horror, sci-fi and adventure movies, and those three genres remain my favorite. Hands down, among my biggest heroes were ‘Taylor’ from ‘Planet of the Apes’ (1968) and ‘Neville’ from ‘The Omega Man’. As I got older and saw more movies, I discovered several more great characters portrayed by that inimitable actor who brought my movie heroes to life, Charlton Heston.

Whether it was ‘A Touch of Evil’, ‘The Naked Jungle’, or ‘The Mountain Men’, I noticed that, aside from the epics Heston may be more remembered for, here is an actor who brings something to his roles that makes them memorable and worthy of multiple viewings. In a lifetime of heroic good-guy roles big and small, all masterfully realized, Heston may surprisingly be at his best when he is playing a tough cynical bastard. This is the persona I believe goes neglected when looking



the Incas, you'll be amazed at how much of it pops up in the entire Indiana Jones trilogy.

Let's start with Heston's character, Harry Steele, a cynical fortune hunter who is carefully hunting clues to the location of an ancient Inca treasure hidden somewhere among the ruins of Machu Picchu. Steele makes a living as a rather unscrupulous tour guide in Cuzco, Peru. Having been to this great old city, I am thrilled every time I watch the film because it has not changed in over fifty years. When Steele learns that an expedition has found an ancient stone map missing a piece that he secretly possesses, he sneaks an opportunity to fit his piece onto the map and thus identify the location of the treasure he seeks: the solid gold 'Sunburst' idol. Steele needs a way to get to Machu Piccu and that comes with the arrival of Elena, an illegal immigrant trying to avoid deportation back behind the Iron Curtain. Steele is naturally interested in the woman because she's attractive, but his priorities are riches. He learns the man searching for her has his own plane, so Steele goes to the phone and tells the man Elena is in Cuzco!

Lest you think Steele is a complete jerk, you soon see that he wrests the plane from the man and brings Elena along to help her get across another border. He just wants to use the plane first to get to Machu Piccu. They fly most of the way, ditch the plane, then hike the remainder of the trail to the ancient Inca city, where they meet up with the archeological team, led by Robert Young. Convinced the expedition leader that they need to hang around until fuel for their ditched plane arrives, Steele gets time to poke around in the ruins while Elena diverts Young's attention. What Steele doesn't know until too late is that his greedy friend Morgan has followed him and a struggle for the 'Sunburst' treasure ensues. In the end, Steele sees his friend die from greed that made him threaten Steele's life and realizes his own desires were leading him down a similarly tragic road. Steele gives the solid gold 'Sunburst' over to the archeologists who return it to the surviving Incas.

Archeology drama more than action-packed adventure, sure. But the legacy is to be found in the imagery and a few key scenes. First, there is Steele himself, wearing khaki clothing and a leather 'A2' flying jacket nearly identical to that worn by Indiana Jones twenty-seven years later. Most remarkably similar is the brown fedora Steele wears, and that he, too, carries a revolver by choice in an era of the automatic. Add a fortune-hunting attitude, a willingness to get rough when he has to, and beard stubble, and Harry Steele is looking an awful lot like a source of inspiration.



SCENE FROM 'THE SECRET OF THE INCAS'  
© Paramount Pictures - Taken by Contributor

Photo courtesy of Finner Heston from the Charlton Heston collection.

Costuming is not where the similarities end, either. Take Steele's friend Morgan, who is also hungry for fortune. Morgan double-crosses Steele in the end and they end up struggling with the prized treasure over a cliff. Morgan loses his life, falling hundreds of feet to his death, all because his greed for gold. This scene is nearly identically played out between Indy and Elsa in 'Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade', with Indy trying to save her while she reaches for the Holy Grail, only to fall to her death into a deep chasm.

Any Indy fan will delight in other oddly familiar moments pointed out by Mike French on Raider.net, such as Steele and Elena aboard a yellow rubber raft on a jungle river, as Indy, Willie and Short Round duplicate much more actively in 'Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom'. There is also a somewhat romantic moment between Steele and Elena in their campsite one night, reminiscent of another scene in 'Temple of Doom'. Once Steele and Elena reach the ruins of the Inca city, they explore tombs with an aura similar to many caverns and tombs throughout the Indiana Jones trilogy, but especially Raiders. French writes: "At one point in the film, Harry even uses a light reflection trick to make a discovery, much like the Map Room scene from Raiders of the Lost Ark." French also points out that Steele is not an archaeologist. He is much closer to the grave robbers encountered by young Indy in 'Last Crusade'. These similarities and more make Charlton Heston's 'Harry Steele' the best contender for the inspiration of Indiana Jones than any other character in adventure cinema.

What I noticed when seeking a copy of this film is how truly difficult it remains to be found. I had to buy a copy from an associate who copied it from a television showing. It's a surprisingly good copy, but why isn't this film available on home video? One can go to any retail outlet of DVDs and find the most atrociously bad movies available, yet amid the awful, forgettable titles committed to DVD and shelf space, Secret of the Incas is nowhere to be found. It begs the question why?

Is it possible that Paramount is suppressing its release?

I contacted Paramount Pictures for information on 'Secret of the Incas'. Directed to the legal department, I was assisted by the research manager, Karen Magid and her office. They explained that anything related to a picture dating that far back (1954) would be archived at an offsite location, but they would be more than happy to provide me with some production stills, lobby cards or any script copies. Now I was getting somewhere!

While I waited for Paramount, I was fortunate enough to obtain an interview with Fraser Heston, producer, director and son of Charlton.

WB: Did your father enjoy working in Peru on this film?

Fraser Heston: Absolutely. He and my mother scrambled all over Machu Piccu and Cuzco and gave me a real thirst for such adventures. Many years later, I followed in their footsteps and spent a month on the Amazon, culminating in a voyage on the Ucayali River and a climb up Huayna Pichu, above the ruined city.\*\*

WB: Does your father acknowledge the more-than-passing resemblance between 'Harry Steele' and 'Indiana Jones' (fedora, leather jacket, archeological treasure hunting, action sequences nearly identical to those in 'Incas', etc)?

FH: Justly so. He was the original (image inspiration), or at least one of them. My mother Lydia, however, was the real Indiana Jones, dragging us all up the Great Pyramids in Egypt and through the jungles of the Yucatan and along Hadrian's Wall, and through every museum in between. We called it 'Ruin Running' and 'Museum Marching'.\*\*

WB: In the early years of his career, your dad seemed to have fun playing guys who were kind of hardened jerks-with-integrity whom you couldn't help but really like. By the time he played Taylor, he was iconic, yet Harry Steele was one of his best of these types of characters. Who were his influences, especially when playing a guy like Steele?

FH: Good Question. Certainly archetypes of hard-nosed male heroes from Hemingway, Stephen Crane, Jack London etc. were influences - but it was a common enough character in film scripts of the 50s and 60s. In real life he is a gentle and good humored fellow, very self deprecating and with a marvelous and very ready smile - so in fact that was all good acting!\*\*

WB: How does your father regard 'Secret of the Incas'?

FH: I think he looks at it as a sort of classic B-Movie - the best example of this type being, perhaps, the film he made with Orson Welles, Touch Of Evil. But he got a real kick out of Secret of the Incas, too - not to mention the remarkable Yma Sumac and her eight octave range. Naked Jungle, another South American jungle adventure which Chuck starred in was an adaptation of the wonderful story,

"Linneugen Versus the Ants" by Carl Stephenson, in which he threw perfume on Eleanor Parker and also uttered the immortal words: "It's awful quiet in the jungle tonight... Yeah, too quiet!"\*\*

WB: Your father's work in Biblical epics and related documentaries are well-known. Was he personally interested in archeology when he made 'Secret of the Incas'?

FH: I'm sure he was – he has always been a great reader of history and an enthusiastic ruin-runner. Perhaps in part from the influence of films like this one!+\*

WB: What are your father's favorite classic adventure films? His favorite adventure authors?

FH: Robert Louis Stephenson. Treasure Island was the first book he read to me as a small boy – I got him to read it over and over, about ten times, I think, and it became my favorite as well. We had the pleasure of making a Treasure Island film together for Ted Turner's TNT cable network – with me as director and screenwriter, and Chuck as Long John Silver, Christian Bale as Jim Hawkins, Oliver Reed as Billy Bones, Christopher Lee as Blind Pew . We filmed in England and Jamaica, aboard the HMS "Bounty", a real working square-rigged sailing ship Ted had acquired from MGM, as I recall. Working with my dad was a wonderful experience I will never forget.

\*As for other films, certainly Hemingway adaptations like The Old Man and The Sea with Spencer Tracey, whom he admired greatly; and For Whom the Bell Tolls with Gary Cooper (with whom he worked on another adventure classic, Wreck of The Mary Deane); The Wild Bunch directed by Sam Peckinpah, (for whom he worked on Major Dundee); and Lawrence of Arabia . His favorite authors are Hemingway, Shakespeare (a great adventure writer, after all) Crane, London, Ray Bradbury (science fiction is surely the ultimate adventure); Patrick O'Brian (author of the Jack Aubrey series) who became his personal friend and whom he regarded as our finest living novelist.'

Following the enlightening discussion with Fraser Heston, I did some further investigation at a museum of history in Hollywood, but multiple requests for contact turned up nothing. Some time after that, I finally heard from Paramount Pictures.

The letter I received stated that the studio possesses no production files, stills, scripts or any other such material for 'Secret of the Incas' anywhere in its archival files. As far as the studio was concerned, the research was at a dead end. The first search I had conducted was also the last. I went to the Internet and did my best, but all I found were references to the film's cast and plot, and very little in the way of graphics that I could use. It seems that the only preservation of this film will be the copies shared among fans, for if Paramount Pictures maintains nothing, that precludes any re-issue of the film in a DVD or other home viewing format. An unfortunate fate for such an important cinematic influence.





Photo courtesy of Fraser Heston from the Charlton Heston collection

However, if the memory of *Secret of the Incas* continues on in the imagery of one of the greatest adventure film series of all time, then it and Charlton Heston's film legacy surely will as well.

- Walter Bosley

Sources:

Fraser Heston and the Heston family

Mike French and [theinsider.net](http://theinsider.net)

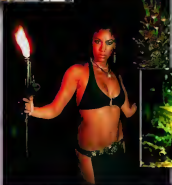
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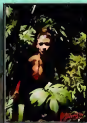
Paramount Pictures

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*Photographed by Doug Nason,  
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# MIST IN DEAD MYRYX

**Wm. Michael Mott**

## **I. The Man from the North**

*Down from the highlands before Nod the river ran, from the peaks of stone-fortressed Dranderoum and to the plains beyond Shin-Ar. Some said it ran even further, that it split and fed the headwaters of smaller rivers, those which cut the plain of mud-battered Shin-Ar like twin scars, to run for thousands of miles southward to the veldt and savannas at the edge of the Sea of Li-Mhu, or to eventually turn westward and fall off the edge of the world.*

The glacier-fed river Githon, wide as a small sea in the highlands to the far northeast, was a torrent of rage for most of its thousand-mile length, becoming even wilder as it narrowed and deepened downstream. Jackdar-Sund had followed it for most of that length, following a grass hald on

him by his own restless nature, by his penchant for swift violence and later regret, and by a number of blood-heads left streaming in his wake. He'd left his tribe the Dan-Aryas and his homeland of Ay-Dan, with little ceremony other than a split skull or twelve, and herbs for his blood. A few women had shed tears to see him go, but a greater number howled for his blood with the rest, the lives of their husbands, sons, and lovers still red on his hands.

So much for strong drink and the casting of gaming-stones. He'd have to swear them both off, one of these days.

He paused now atop the foothills of the Caucasus mountains, at the southward rampart of the region of Branderoun, and gazed with wonder at the rolling green hills below. A warm, wet breeze tousled his thick blonde mane, and the westerling sun sparked from his grey-blue eyes. At his hip was a long broadsword of hammered iron of his own making, and a dirk was in his belt alongside his pouch. His costume was the simple and light one of a man constantly on the move: green-dyed, coarse-woven breeks that allowed both swift running and the riding of a variety of beasts, and a gold-tinted sleeveless shirt of worn deerskin. His calf-high boots were of tough narrocks-leather, made by the leather-smith artisans of the Yumas-Aryas, a rival people of similar type to his own.

His build was striking, but not exceptional for his race or tribe. He was tall and rangy, yet built mightily with long, rolling muscles that contained greater strength than many would think—as many a foe, in fact, had found out to their brief dismay. He moved with a swift celerity of motion, an economy of movement that had nothing extraneous or superfluous to it. He moved like a wolf of the high plains, or like the white tiger that was the totem of his clan.

And like a tiger, he eyed the hills and plains below hungrily. He had heard of civilisation, of the excesses and decadence, and the riches, of those things called cities. Once he had thought to travel to the east, to those lands of Vinidia that were ancient before the last great cataclysm, when the moon fell and the oceans rose like walls to strike the stars. But circumstances had driven him westward instead, and he was resigned to see it through. No sense in wasting a trek of a thousand miles or more, much of it on foot! His pursuers had finally either given up the hunt or died beneath his steel, and he was now on the verge of a new world.

Vinidia could wait until later. Perhaps other things cooled off a bit, and if he ever made it back to the lands of the Dan-Aryas, he would join one of those groups of marauders from the Aryan tribes which had begun to invade and plunder that ancient and mysterious land, just as his ancestors, the half-mythical Yener and Eair, had done throughout most of the lands to the far north and west. He did not often plan far ahead—life was too fraught with peril, often too brief, to even bother with long term ambitions. The thought was a passing fancy, though, one which he occasionally entertained.

Now he would pass through the southern lands beyond Mount Ereret, which he could just barely see, flaming golden in its uppermost snowy reaches, far, far to the northwest. North of Ereret, somewhere, was the mysterious Khursag Khurra, just one of the strongholds of the Ananagi, the serpent-men giants also called *Neffres* and *Yotun*, although the latter dwell further north, in the icy, partially subglacial region of Nefelheim, a region that still bearing the name of their unhuman ancestors. But it was the southward expansion of these unhuman despots that interested Jackdar most; they were said to have not only conquered those lands for themselves, but to have driven the human race dwelling there to prodigious wonders, and the discoveries of great treasures. And he would see those lands of the god-kings, the southern *Neffres*, the tyrants and monsters of legend, whose exploits were used to frighten children at night, even among the high-fearless Aryan tribes—He would plunder them, by Thunor, and kill them if necessary, as he and his kind had slain their egreish, half-human cousins, when they'd found them in the icy north or on the eastern steppes! Many a cannibal giant or other strange hybrid thing had met its doom before the advance of the tribes of Aryas across the world, since the last cataclysmic End of All Things and the New Beginning!

Word had reached even the wild, high places, where only barbarians like himself, and even wilder savages roamed—the name of a city to be seen, a place of wonders beyond imagining—the city of Dilmun, and it's dark twin Kutba, said to exist in the ground below it. A place of wealth, this Dilmun, ruled by half-gods or half-devils, depending on one's point of view—but bursting at the seams with wealth for the taking, if only one daring enough would come!

Jackdar grinned slightly. One such was on his way now. He set off down a goat-trail that was barely perceptible to the eye, but which was as bold as red paint to his wilderness-honed, barbarian sight. A grove of distant trees was his destination, at the base of the hills; there he would make camp, eat the last of his small store of dried meat, and sleep.

Twilight came leaping across the hills behind him.

## 2. The Harbinger of Death

During the night he was awakened by a sound like distant screaming, or an eerie wind whistling through the hills about the wood. A smell of distant smoke met his nostrils, a smoke other than that of his fire—the pungent scent of burnt flesh was on the wind. It seemed as if his ears caught the faintest sound of voices raised in pain or terror, but then, it was gone.

Toward dawn he woke suddenly. With the alertness of a wild thing, he came instantly awake; lying in the darkness, he moved only his hand to the hilt of the broadsword beside him. His fire was a dim mound of smoldering red eyes a few feet away, giving no illumination.

There came a sound from the trees nearby. Jackolur lay still, yet tensed the muscles of his long body for any necessary surge to action. Then he saw it—two red coals, as red and smoldering as those of his campfire, some twenty feet up in a nearby tree.

Eyes.

The red, gleaming eyes of an unnatural thing, burning with an internal brightness that defied the rules of a rational world.

A flutter of darkness, a beating of massive wings, and the man-sized, red-eyed shadow swooped down upon the Darz-Aryam. With one mighty surge of strength, Jackolur gripped his blade in both hands and swept it upward, to feel it cleave leathery membranes, and thick flesh that was strangely spongy and which sought to drag the blade from his hand with an unexplainable stickiness. A terrific hissing roar filled the forest, accompanied by a frenzied beating of black wings—

Then it was gone.

He leapt to his feet, sword in hand, and scanned the dark above and around. The wood was utterly silent, but that strange scream still seemed to echo from distant holes as he strained to listen. He wiped some sort of ichor from his blade on the grass of the glen.

Somehow, he doubted whatever it had been would be back. He stoked his fire to a full blaze and cat-napped until dawn.

Jackolur woke to the sound of birds singing, birdsong which was of a type strange and new to his ears. The sun was just rising, and a dim golden radiance crept through the thick grove of trees. Beside him, the embers of his fire still crackled slightly, and his belly rumbled hungrily.

A well-aimed stone from his sling brought down a feathered breakfast, which he plucked, gutted, and charred slightly on the coals before wolfing it down. Then he was off through the trees, from thicket to glade to thicket again. Soon the wood gave way to open hill country, and he moved warily out of the trees and into the open. The scent of distant smoke again met his nostrils.

The rolling hills continued to roll, covered in an early spring carpet of knee-high grass. The morning sky was a vivid, vibrant blue, with the exception of a dark cloud of smoke to the southwest. Curiosity got the best of the barbarian, and he decided to take a look at the cause.

In less than an hour he came to the remains of a village between two long, low hills. Low-built huts of sticks, wattle, and thatch were mostly destroyed, a few still burning with low flame. The air was filled with the stench of blood and the reek of death, of spilled entrails and dashed brains. Sixty or more villagers, short, dark-skinned and black-haired folk, lay strewn about in postures of utter devastation.

Kites and vultures wheeled above.

He scanned the scene for movement and saw none. Drawing his broadsword, he came down the hill and entered the village. The villagers had apparently been armed only with farm implements and sharpened sticks for spears; their wounds were definitely inflicted by sharp metal weapons.

Old folk, mostly, or middle-aged; where then were the youths and maidens, the children?

He moved cautiously through the destruction, disgusted. His people only fought to survive or to raid for goods, yet did not murder other peoples indiscriminately or unprovoked. His light eyes reflected the green of the surrounding hills, the blue of the sky, the flicker of orange flames, yet they burned with a hate of their own.

A clatter behind him brought him about. He wheeled, ready to strike—

A dog, large, lank and covered in shaggy, pale fur, stood regarding him. Its ears were laid back and its teeth were bared, yet it made no sound. He clicked at it with his tongue in friendly fashion, yet it did not move. Then he heard something else.

Somewhere, someone moaned.

Moving quickly to a nearby shack, mostly destroyed, he found an old woman gasping out her

lost breaths. Jackdour knelt beside her, and in the trade-tongue asked her what he could:

"Who?"

"Edimma," she whispered, and the hairs on his arms and nape rose. She raised her left hand slightly and waved vaguely toward the west. "Edimma..."

Reaching feebly, she placed something in his hands—a crude yet polished talisman, shaped like a six-pointed starburst. Then, she slumped back and was gone. Jackdour rose, and looked westward.

He had heard of these *Edimma*, servants of the *Neffrem* or *Anawmagl*, and perhaps, as some said, not completely human themselves. The image of the black thing which had fallen upon him in the night still fresh in his mind, he left the ruined hovel and set out westward. He did not like being attacked in his sleep, and longed to share his lack of appreciation with his assailant, if possible.

One direction was as good as another, after all, and it rarely occurred to him to go out of his way to avoid risk, which was a part of everyday life. He placed the carving in his pouch. What had she meant by giving it to him? Was it a bounty or blood-fee, or a good-luck token? He shook his head.

Leaving the ruined village without a backward glance, he was yet aware that the silent, half-feral dog followed him at a distance.

### 3. Prisoners of the Vulture-Priests

*Kreetha of Delis* stumbled as the things about her wrists were yanked savagely. Another hard tug and she nearly fell, but she scampered, despite her weariness, to stay afoot. She had already seen, by example, how these strange, tall, dark-robed men dealt with the weak and the tired.

She looked about at the weary faces and forms of her fellow prisoners, their simple homespun and woven-grass garb now filthy, tattered and torn, their shoulders drooping and heads hanging in dejection.

Six maidens and five young men had been beaten mercilessly, six more children of various ages whipped with hard leathern thongs—No, she would give them no such satisfaction with her own flesh. And if the time came for the unthinkable, she would force them to kill her, for the thought of their strange, pallid, six-fingered hands on her flesh set it to crawling with revulsion.

Another tug, and then a call for a halt. She could barely understand their language, akin as it seemed to be to the god-tongue, more than to the language of men. There were twelve of them, each standing at least seven feet in height, several near eight feet tall, true giants compared to her small-statured folk. They were hideous beings, in her eyes—monsters in seemingly human form, with strange eyes of an eerie bronze, pupils larger than normal, and pale, wispy yet shaggy hair, along with strangely hairless faces, necks, and arms, when she could see the latter emerge from robe-like cloaks. Their skulls were shaped strangely as well, high-browed yet elongated toward the back, longer than the heads of true human beings. When they opened their mouths, double rows of teeth could be seen. They carried huge curved swords of bronze, and wore scale-mail of thick black leather; to her eyes, they were scaled demons, for she'd never seen armor before. Black pantaloons to their black-booted ankles, and long black cloaks sporting seven-in vulture feathers completed their costumes.

Now they halted and spoke in a rapid, gliding dialect, as they thrust their captives roughly to the ground or commanded them to sit. The thirty or so young prisoners complied wearily, as these Edimma, these devil-slaves of the god-kings, gathered about one of their own.

Their leader was dying.

Four of them had been carrying him, the largest of the lot, since sometime before dawn that morning. Of all of the Edimma, he was the only one wearing a metal crown of sorts, a bronze band covered in strange sigils, and his cloak was of the skin of a gigantic bird, covered with huge, leathery flaps and an abundance of long black feathers.

Now he lay in the grass, coughing up blood. Even from thirty feet away, Kreetha could see that his bound right arm, tight against his body, was half-severed, and his ribs were smashed and punctured to his lungs. With every breath, frothy blood oozed from the wound, and it was a statement to his unnatural parentage or ancestry that he had survived this long...

Who could have done this, to one of the Servants of the Gods? Surely not one of her people,



who had no metal weapons to speak of...

The nineteen other Edimmu stood around as if waiting. Slowly, slowly, the leader's heaving chest moved slower, and then with a hideous, scratchy death-rattle, he died. Another of the beasts reached down and roughly yanked the circlet from his head; kicking the corpse over, this individual then pulled the feathered cloak from the dead shoulders, appropriating this for himself as well.

There were no arguments, and Kreetha could see why. Not only was he nearly as tall as the dead one, he was much broader of girth and more thickly muscled than the rest. Casting off his own cloak, he donned that of their erstwhile leader with a flourish, then set the metal circlet on his brow.

Turning to the other Edimmu, he began to bark commands which she could hardly understand. The other devil-men listened stoically, nodding slightly.

They were breaking into two groups, and dividing the captives into two groups as well. Six Edimmu would proceed to a place called Myryx, and the others would journey farther, to legendary Dilmun-Kutha, for both places housed Anannagi gods who desired the flesh of human slaves for dubious purposes....

She shuddered. Both places were legends of terror to simple folk like her own; Dilmun-Kutha was one of the Homes of the Gods on Earth, a place of legendary wonders and even more legendary evil and depravity, while Myryx was a place Accursed, ruled by Nefleem masters gone insane. Even though only a day's march from her home village, it was a place forbidden by fearful tradition to approach or enter....

Now the humans were yanked roughly to their feet. Casting sad farewell glances at one another, they were divided into two groups and led away, one group of seven toward the south, the remaining four, all women, toward the west. Kreetha found herself in the latter group, stumbling to keep up again, as the new leader, whom the others called Mastem, yanked them along behind him, accompanied by only one other Edimmu rider.

The sun reached its zenith, the heat of the day increased, and still they marched.

Kreetha knew that, whatever their destinations, she and her fellow villagers were surely doomed.

#### 4. On The Trail

Jackdar-Sund examined the huge corpse with interest. The wounds had obviously been inflicted by a sword-stroke, and he was fairly certain that the weapon had been his own.

The Nefleem-spawn was huge, but Jackdar had seen larger specimens in his twenty-odd years, and had helped to slay more than a few of them. Often such beings would become outcasts from their own kind—rapists, cannibals, and despoilers, ogres to haunt lonely places or to invade the settlements of pure-bred men while the inhabitants lay sleeping. This one, though, was apparently a sorcerer as well, shape-shifting into a hideous, flighted form...the form of a huge vulture-like being.

*The Song of the Vulture...* Even in the far northern stoppes, tales of this devil-cult had reached men's ears, around the council-fires at night. It was said that such half-human shamans would occasionally emerge from their mountainous, subterranean shades, to visit misfortune, calamity, and predation upon the settlements of human beings....

He spat on the ogre in disgust, kicked the head sharply, and rose to examine the tracks in the dirt around the body. One set indicated huge booted feet mixed with smaller, bare, human tracks, leading due south, while the other set went west. The latter group was smaller, with the prints of only two of the giant captors. Dilmun allegedly lay to the south, quite a distance away; a long march that he was planning on making anyway, one way or the other. But this westward march—what was this about? Why only two of these devil-men and fewer captives? Were there treasures to be had, perhaps traded for, or other wonders to be seen in that direction?

Two enemies represented better odds than several, if it came to fighting. He took the old woman's gift from his pouch, scowled, and headed west.

Behind him, the dog sniffed at the Edimmu corpse, then lifted its leg to administer the ultimate rebuke.

Kreetha was roused from a brief sleep by a deep-voiced command. Looking up from where she lay curled in the dirt, she saw one of the Edimmu towering over her, blocking out the westerling sun. Behind him, strange convoluted shapes loomed, shadow-darkened on the side facing them.

"Give your best, slave-meat," the culture-man grunted, and she complied. Behind him stood the one called Mastem, leaning at her with an appreciation mixed with malevolence. "Mastem wants to question you!"

The culture-clad giant stepped forward. "Girl," he said, in the common human tongue of these lands, "Would you live? Or would you be wed to the god?" With a wave of his hand, he indicated the three other dowdier women from her village, all friends and relatives alike. "These," he continued, "will wed Zabushel. In wedding him, they will join him in immortal flesh. But he only requires three, so I give you a choice—"

Despite her predicament, she spoke up bravely. "So what is the other choice? Wed you? Bed you? Touch your hideous flesh? Become your willing slave? I'll die first—bite off my tongue and swallow it, choke to death!"

Mastem chuckled with a rumble, grinning a hugely toothy grin of sharp, double-rowed teeth. "We will see... You'll beg for my carcasses when you see the Master of this place?"

Again they were yanked forward by the Edimmu. Strangely-shaped columns of a pale stone were before them, and the ground itself changed from grassy terrain to a rocky, chalky region of the same stuff. Blocks and chunks of the material were scattered as far as the eye could see, broken only by an occasional tuft of ragged shrub, and what looked like a small river flowing through from the plain they'd just left.

Towers and turrets loomed ahead, and the silhouette of a ziggurat could be seen. They came to a huge stone bridge over the river, and, staggering behind their long-striding captors, the women of Dells entered Dead Myrrs.

## 5. Screams in the Dark

*Jackdar examined the columns before him with interest. Reaching forth a finger, he scratched the surface, and tasted his finger.*

*Salt.*

He looked about in the twilight gloom, mostly ignoring the hunger in his belly; if he had to, he would kill and eat the dog that now slunk close by his side. He did not drive it away; it appeared to be tracking the Edimmu, even so he did. Perhaps it had scores to settle as well....

The columns seemed to stretch away in a huge semicircle—or a complete circle—around this region. Many of them had fallen before the onslaught of centuries of weathering, flash-flooding, and the like. The ground, likewise, was covered in salt to a depth of what looked like several feet in places; and it all had the look of having been put in place, like the columns, with deliberation.

Ahead, he glimpsed a glimmer as of the sunset on water. A thick mist seemed to be growing from a nearby offshoot of the Gihon, which he'd followed much of the way across the plain during the afternoon. Dark shadows, peaked rooftops, a gigantic triangular mass, all loomed ahead...with scowling beaks and hand on hip, he set forward once more.

This would be his first sight of a real city. And it seemed to be one which was completely dead.

He moved cautiously, for appearances could be deceiving. Beside him came the dog, head lowered, eyes glowing furiously. Even in the gloom, he could make out an occasional track or scuff-mark in the salted ground, and soon he came to an elaborately-carved stone structure crossing the narrow river. With care he stepped upon it, for he had never seen a bridge before in his life.

On the other bank the city loomed, dark and dank, and amber and purple with shadows, and a strange, thick mist was rising. He entered it with care, stepping on the cracked and broken paving as if he were stalking a deer across a sward of fallen leaves, careful lest he disturb the silence. Over the streets lay a slick glaze of saline rime, a coating from centuries of wind-blown salt particles. Windows gaped in walls like the eye-sockets of skulls; around him the mist rose quickly, lapping about his knees and thighs. It was moist, that mist, and sticky....

Soon the man and dog came to a central area, a plaza near the center of the city. On the other side loomed a structure which at first Jackdar took to be a small, oddly-symmetrical mountain, but which he soon realized was a man-made structure like the others around him. It was tiered in several sections, terminating at a height of a hundred feet or more with a smaller set of structures. The whole mass of stone appeared to be covered with elaborate carvings of a perverse and disturbing nature.

At the apex of this, within a columned wall, a light glimmered.

Jackdar started to slink around the square and approach the structure using the other

buildings and alleyways is cover, but decided that a direct approach would work just as well. Somewhere behind the pyramid, the sun had almost gone down into the abyss of night, and long darkness, the structure's last shadow of the day, filled the square with an ample cover of gloom.

Half-bent he ran across the square, still as sure-footed as a tiger, the dog at his heels making more noise. He stopped before the steps leading upward, contemplating the area at the top of the ziggurat.

A distant, metallic scrape came to his ears and he went into a defensive crouch. To his left, a low doorway, almost lost in the darkness, gaped like a wound. Hesitating but a moment, he decided to examine the source of the noise and strode quickly to the opening, drawing his sword silently from a well-oiled scabbard.

A fetid, carrion odor met his nostrils, the reek pouring from the doorway in a steady gust. Cautiously he approached, peering carefully within. Some distance down a long, sloping corridor, tilted gradually downward, a single flame flickered dimly.

Taking one last deep breath of the air outside, Jackdar plunged into the blackness, and the dog did not follow.

Kreetha slumped in her chains. Her mind was a wreck, a shocked realm of horrors that she never thought could exist. She prayed to the One for escape, but she knew that none would be possible. Already she'd seen the pit beneath the pyramid, and the unspeakable thing that dwelt there....

Her kinswomen, virginal maidens all, were gone, taken by it into its alysial lair, drawn down by—what? Its arms? Hands? Fingers? She shook again with uncontrollable sobbing at the memory of the hellish, surging abomination that had boiled forth from tunnels far below, at the chanting summons of the two Edimmu. Those surging members of the creature, the "god" as Mastem had called it, had taken on horribly suggestive shapes as they moved, to wrap the other women in a foul embrace beyond imagining... Their distant screams, from black depths far below, still seemed to ring in her ears.

Again she threw herself against her chains, scraping them against the stone wall with a loud rasping sound, planting her feet against the wall and pulling until her wrists began to bleed again. Maybe she would bleed to death, and this would all be over...

A laugh, low but still somehow echoing deeply, brought her out of her fit of desperation. Slumping against the wall, she could make out the form of Mastem in the door to her cell, his toothy grin glistening in the torchlight from the passageway without. His huge bulk filled the doorway. Stepping inside, he took off his cloak and tossed it to the floor, and began to unfasten his leathern cuirass as well.

"Ah, little duck!" He cooed, his accent of her language horrific to her ears. "How would you like to bear the child of a demigod—for that is what we Edimmu are, you know! Our fathers and grandfathers were either gods or demigods as well...As my Lord Zabushel has demonstrated!"

"That wad of snot is no god!" She spat. "He is a vilestess beyond description, an excrucient crawling in darkness!"

Stepping swiftly forward, Mastem took her face in one huge hand, his fingers actually reaching to the top of her skull and his thumb resting on the opposite side of her face.

"Have a care!" he snarled. "Once he strode across the world as a true god, on two legs and with two arms like you and I! He was among the most beautiful of the Star-Born, before he warred with Lord Enfil and the others, and was imprisoned here in his capitol..."

She thought her head would collapse from the pressure of that grip, but as suddenly as he had grabbed her, he released her now. He stood back, contemplating her.

"Listen to me, daughter of men," he continued thoughtfully. "I have seen a hundred generations of your kind come and go upon this ball of mud called the world. I am only partially of the Blood, but I am old beyond your imagining! My kind were building cities of ancient splendor when your ancestors were still crawling back from savagery after the cataclysm! When Stygia fell to the northern barbarians, and the Hyborian cities drank the tide, or were turned into rubble by the rage of the moving Earth, my kind were sleeping below, in crypts prepared in ages even more distant! My ancestors were worshipped as gods by the kings of Acheron and Commarius, and—"

"You're a filthy hellspawn, a thing of darkness!" She growled. If she had been free, she would have flung herself on him in an attack doomed to failure. "The thing in the pit is no god, but a relic of a dark time in which all such filth should have perished!"

"Nevertheless, he was a god in his day," the Edimmu continued thoughtfully. "When Nyarlathotep strode the ruins of Khemi, Zabushel was by his side. Millennia before that time, the priest-kings of Acheron, my older kin, reddened his altars with the blood of youths and babes! But

of course, you know nothing of such things...Listen to me!" His eyes began to glow with an unnatural, reddish gleam in the darkness. "Upon the daughters of men my kind will occasionally feast a child, and for this honor you have been chosen, just as my true-god fathers chose my ancestral human mothers for ages before! I pay homage to Zabuzabel with brides, though he can no longer spawn brats with them, and will probably just eat them after he toys with them a while—but you, you I chose for myself!"

Kroatha threw herself violent from side to side to avoid his towering advance. "What of your god in the hole? Does he not know you have robbed him of another bride?"

"In his imprisonment here, he has descended into idleness, as mindless as Unko-Sathla or the Shackled Ones," Mastem breathed huskily, "and what he does not know will not matter! I do my duty for the power it brings me, and the favor it brings even in the eyes of his enemies among the other gods—for he is my father!"

And with that he was upon her, a huge hand stifling her screams in the dark.

#### 4. The Pit of Zabuzabel

Jackdar moved down the corridor toward the distant wall-sconce, in which a lamp flickered lowly. As he descended the incline he heard more than once the clank or scrape of metal, and once he thought he heard distant voices raised in disagreement.

At length the corridor terminated at another which crossed its path, this one more level, and he was faced with a decision: left, or right? Unlike the previous one leading down, this one featured the black holes of doorways every so often on either side, and someone had lit a few guttering oil-lamps along the walls. Making a choice at random, he turned to his right and padded along on stealthy feet, broadsword in one hand and dagger in the other.

Ahead an expansive darkness gaped. Sheathing his dagger, he lifted one of the lamps from its sconce and held it before him as he passed into the chamber. The foulness of the air here was almost unbearable.

The chamber was huge, larger than any cavern the northerner had ever seen. It towered into blackness above him, and only the inward-sloping walls, higher up, revealed that it was beneath the center of the structure. Before him there was a vast pit, perfectly square in shape, and out of this a foul wind blew—

The rush of wind from his left was his only warning. Wheeling, Jackdar raised his sword in both hands, to catch a massive swordstroke that nearly drove him to his knees. Above him the Edimma boomed, bronze tubar raised double-handed for a killing stroke that would split him from crown to crotch—

Jumping in a sidewise roll, Jackdar slashed at his opponent as he leapt, tossing the burning lamp at his face. His sword scraped along leathern armor with little effect, but the giant staggered back at the force of the blow, and struck at the flaming missile with one hand. The barbarian rebounded like a cat and faced his attacker, crouched for combat—shorter and faster, he would have to get in under the superior reach of the Edimma, and avoid his great strength as well.

The lamp clattered to the floor, and flaming oil made a trailing puddle to the edge of the pit, and over. Now, the flames leapt up eagerly, and illumination filled the chamber. In the leaping light, the pale, angular features of the vulture-priest were like those of a reptile, viperous and cold. Jackdar sneered at the giant, and the creature returned the expression.

The sword slash had half-parted the leather of the Edimma's cuirass. A few scale-shaped sections hung loosely, leaving a more vulnerable area for attack. Following his gaze, the ogre laughed lowly and lunged, taking care to come in low and guard his midsection. Jackdar deflected the blow with a clang and counter-struck, nearly catching the giant at the groin, as the back of the giant's fist glanced from his mouth, bringing a spray of blood; both combatants fell back, appraising one another anew.

"Neffem sewn," Jackdar muttered through his smashed, stinging lips. "I'll send you to hell..."

"My kind are equally at home below the ground as above," the giant retorted, surprising Jackdar by speaking the language of the Aryan tribes. He laughed at the evident look on the barbarian's face. "Aye, I speak your tongue—and spoke it, and its precursors, for centuries! I have more years of fighting-experience than you have hairs on that thick skull, maning, and I'll prove it to you!"

With that, the monstrous humanoid lunged. Jackdar was hauled backward by hammering

blows from above, somehow managing to deflect them, and he lashed out with one booted foot in a high kick.

With satisfaction he felt a snap and heard a pop, as the giant's right knee-cap gave way and slid around to the outer side of his leg. With a scream of pain he faltered, and Jackdar hurled his sword tip in the pale throat above him. The Edimunn staggered back, gripping the sporting wound—but like his dead leader, he too was harder to kill than a normal human being. Still he hefted his sword, and hate gleamed in his eyes as he readied himself for a death-rush at his opponent...

Jackar tensed for the attack, aware that it would come with complete abandon and he very well might not survive it. Then suddenly, behind the tottering half-man, something rose up in the darkness like a swelling toadstool of immense size, belinging with it a cloud of the same cloying mist that seemed to seep from the stones in the city outside.

Living horror fell upon the Edimunn, so swiftly he could not even scream. Piles of pulpy flesh, tendrils and tentacles of smaking filth, a mountain of living carrion began to pour upon his screaming form. The stuff recoiled from the flaming oil, but the blood of its victim pumped vigor into it as it feasted.

Jackdar turned and ran. During those brief seconds he had seen not only the source of the rotting stench, but a titanic thing of elder-world darkness, seeming vaguely manlike for moments, then bulging and surging into unrecognizable, fungoid shapes. The bodies, limbs, and heads of men, women, and animals had been a major part of its substance, emerging momentarily from a pulsing morass of putridity to vanish again as quickly, replaced by sliding slickness.

His gorge rising at the memory, Jackdar flew up the corridor in the opposite direction. Behind him, the thing from the pit continued its feast, with the cracking of bones and strange sucking sounds like nothing he'd ever heard...

A muffled gasp reached his ears from the somewhere ahead, along with the clank of metal. Behind him, a wet sound was growing, and without looking, he knew that the monstrosity from the pit was attempting to force its mass through the doorway and into the corridor.

The corridor terminated suddenly at another one which crossed it, and he glimpsed movement in a nearby room or cell. Without hesitation, Jackdar plunged into this doorway, in the hope of finding a quick way to the outer air.

Sword in hand, he came within yards of the Edimunn before him, who had just drawn his own curved blade at the barbarian's sudden entrance. In one hand he held a dark-haired woman by her slight shoulder. He released her and turned to face the interloper.

Without a word, Jackdar fell upon this new foe with a flurry of blows.

## 7. Culmination

*Struggling vainly against the giant Edimunn*, Kresetha tried to bite him when he bent to kiss her. He laughed as she struggled, enjoying her rage. His breath was hot and rank, similar in odor to the rotted-flesh stench that permeated this place.

Long she fought, tossing about, but he held her like a doll, and lowered his gamut, hideous visage to her heart-shaped, full-lipped one. She turned her head at the last moment, yet again, and his clumsy, brutish kiss fell on the side of her face. The only sounds were those of their struggle, his occasional chuckle, her gasps for air and the clanking of her chains against the wall. Yet it seemed that she heard something else, a clangor as of a hammer striking metal, of distant movement—

Suddenly, a man hurt into the room. He was tall and powerfully built, but he seemed fully human. He had the look of a wild wolf in his eyes and in his stance, his blonde hair flying wild, his teeth gritted, lips bleeding from a violent blow. She had never seen such sky-tinted eyes, hair the color of honey... Was he man, or devil after all? He did not wait for an invitation to join the party, but leapt upon the startled Mastem, scarcely giving the giant Edimunn time to draw his own blade. The small room was quickly filled with combat.

Kresetha fell back against the wall in stunned amazement. She had no idea who the newcomer was, but she longed to see his steel embedded in the giant's gullet! In the confined space, Mastem had a hard time maneuvering, even in swinging his huge tulwar.

The newcomer danced about like a panther, slashing with the edge of his blade which he held sideways in front of his body. He gripped it two-handed, one hand on the handle and the other on the short ricasso. His body was a wiry, crouching, slashing ball of fury. No small man, he still seemed like a child before the eight-foot height of the ogreish son of Nefleem sire. Nevertheless, his

attack was taking its toll, as two of the giant's fingers lay twitching on the floor and thick blood spurted freely.

With a roar of fury Mastem charged, wild as a raging bull, and the smaller man was driven back. The battle moved into the corridor outside, and then Mastem stepped rapidly back out of Kreetha's view—and she heard his retreating steps as he turned and fled!

The newcomer, covered in a score of minor flesh wounds, leaned panting at the lintel, glaring at her with a still unabated battle-rage. She pulled away from the wall tensed, ready to die—then he strode forward and in two hard strokes sheared the slender, rusted shackles in twain, and yanked her roughly by the arm and out of the room.

Even through his bloodlust, Jackdar could see that the girl was beautiful, and like none he'd ever seen before. Where the women of his own race were possessed of great beauty, they were generally tall and athletic, and often went to war with their men. This woman was small, curvy, delicate...He heard an ominous sloshing sound, and grabbed her by the arm again.

"Time to go", he growled, and though she did not understand his words, his meaning was clear enough. Behind them a massive flood of half putrid, greenish flesh, began to grope blindly into the corridor from the other one, and they ran in the same direction taken by the wounded Edinnu.

Now came a nightmare race, as they left the area of illumination. Looking back for an instant, Kreetha was horrified to see the bulk of Zabuzbel filling the dimly-lit hall behind them, surging and lurching in pursuit, sending out pseudopods which seemed to be suffling the air. Instinctively, she knew that the were doing just that—scenting on the blood which oozed from her rescuer's wounds.

Now they were in near-total blackness, heading upward at an incline. Ahead of them was a patch of dark gray that was only slightly less black, and then they were through it, stumbling into a side-street beside the ziggurat, and gasping in the clean night air.

Behind them, the ravenous god-thing gurgled as it came up the inner slope. Wasting no more time, they set off toward the plaza around the corner, as Zabuzbel erupted like vomit from the depths of its once-great temple—

The mass of the thing hit the salt-coated stones, and recoiled, hissing from a thousand spontaneous orifices. Huge tentacles of fleshy stuff snaked after them, but drew back hishling, as the salt burned them like acid. Wasting no more time watching, they ran.

At the front of the ziggurat they were met by the dog, who was sprayed in blood not his own. Apparently he, too, had met up with Mastem, and had left his mark on the wounded giant. The Edinnu, however, was nowhere to be seen. The rising moon bathed the scene in a ghostly light, and the trio of interlopers in this city of the damned headed for the river, and the bridge which they had crossed to enter this accursed place.

Behind them they could still hear hissing and the slap of unnatural flesh, but slowly this died away. As they rushed through the twisting streets and alleys, the strange, sticky mist began to rise again. Suddenly, the stone posts of the bridge loomed before them in the moonlight.

They ran onto the stone expanse, and from the river, hell erupted.

Somehow, Zabuzbel had enough reason left to dodge the salt-encrusted areas of greatest torment, and had found some subterranean outlet to the river that ran through the town. A billowing, wallowing, shifting mass of abominable forms, it swelled below and beside the bridge, sending tentacles and pseudopods of putrid flesh up and over, to grope blindly for its prey. Kreetha stumbled and fell, just as one such tentacle swept above her head by inches, and staggering to her feet, she fled safely to the other side.

Jackdar was not so lucky. Caught in the middle of a dozen waving pseudopods, he lashed out, as the dog at his side leapt and snarled and bit through rotten tentacles and feelers; these just flowed back together to be rejoined with the original mass. Jackdar had no problem in cutting down the groping things, as they came at him blindly and awkwardly, but he was cut off from fleeing, and he knew that soon he would grow weary, slow, and then feed the demonic thing with his own flesh...

Zabuzbel quaked and the stone bridge shook, as it reared and flung its tremendous bulk against the side of the structure. It slid back down rapidly, but again it tried to crest the top, and again. A huge multi-branched pseudopod came up swiftly, to catch Jackdar by his ankle and nearly pull him down; then the dog was on it, tearing at it as if it were a gigantic snake, and he was free.

The dog was not so lucky. The tentacle recoiled and wrapped around its form, squeezed, and it was reduced to a sudden pulp before it died without even a whimper. Jackdar was glad its death had been a quick one, and hoped that his would be as well—

A pseudopod flicked about his torso like a whip, gripping him with the strength of a python.

As it squeezed he felt the strength threatening to leave his body, then another coil wrapped around his waist, covering belt and scabbards and pouch, drawing him slowly, inexorably toward the edge of the bridge.

Again a monstrous bloating from many mouths was heard, and the tentacles quickly recoiled from him, almost spinning him like a top in their urgency to be free of him. One of them was smoking with a yellow flickering radiance, where it had come into contact with the pouch at his belt. The whole mass of the monster fell back into the river with a tremendous splash.

Jackdar wasted no time wondering about his good fortune. He fled after the girl, back toward the salt waste and the clean grasses beyond.

Ahead of him the salt-rubble gleamed in the moonlight. Far ahead, he saw the girl, still moving at a staggering run. His ribs burned with agonizing pain, and he was sure that at least two of them had been cracked or broken by the vise-like grip of the thing from the pit. Gritting his teeth he ground forward, step after agonizing step.

Behind him, Zahuzbel hurt up onto the river-bank.

The hatred of thousands of years of imprisonment, the rage of a shackled tyrant—who knows what drove it to leave the salted waste? It shuddered up like a massive worm, onto the salted expanse, and as it blossomed and steamed at the touch of the salt, the strange mist rose in huge clouds about its body as its flesh was converted to a putrid gas....

Determined to have its prey, or vengeance, or satisfaction, it plunged across the salt region in pursuit of the man who had defied it. It lurched and flopped like a worm on a griddle, shaking the ground with its massive spasms and throes, yet still it came! A nauseating mist filled the air, billowing at Jackdar's heels as the mass of the monster continued to bear down on him, slowly but surely—

Ahead loomed the columns of salt. Stumbling to a halt beside an eroded specimen, Jackdar examined the weathered base, eaten away by centuries of flooding. If the thing followed him into the grasslands, escaping its prison after centuries, he was sure there would be no escape and it would eventually catch him, too weary to fight or flee....

With all of his strength, he began to hack at the narrowed base of the column of salt.

Like a woodman, one blow after another, he worked. His broadsword chopped huge chunks of crumbling salt from the structure. He heard death approaching, flopping, slapping, searing—and still he frantically chopped.

With a creaking crack like a tree, the column began to totter inward. Leaping aside with what felt like the last of his strength, Jackdar dodged a swiping tentacle as the many-tonned bulge of salt fell fully upon the coiling, pulsing body of the Zahuzbel the Accursed!

There was a blast of massive wind as the monster was obliterated. Streaming mist boiled out, coating everything with a salty grime, and Jackdar squirmed away on his belly, then found his feet, then ran stumbling into the grassland beyond. Behind him, Zahuzbel thrashed and gurgled as it melted away, melted into a viscous, green-tar slime that was quickly fusing with the salt of the ground....

The Dan-Aryas staggered to a halt, hardly aware of it when the girl he'd saved took his arm, led him away, and leapt up to plant kiss after kiss on his bruised and bleeding features.

Then something black, larger than a man, something with wings and talons and red, red eyes, blotted out the moon as it fell upon them.

Upon its head was a circlet of bronze, covered with strange symbols.

Jackdar raised his sword weakly, but he knew that he would be dead in an another instant—

Like the arrows of the gods, spears flew, three of them striking the shapeshifter with the full force of the mighty arms which had thrown them. The impact knocked the flighted horror aside, and it fell flopping into the grass like a huge hat, then was still. The red light slowly faded from its eyes and its lips drew back from its fangs in a snarl of death.

Jackdar turned to face those who had saved his life. Even he was surprised to see three of his own people, the last of his blood-fond pursuers, striding up. The largest one, a red-bearded giant of a man, shook his head.

"Ymir's halls! What manner of devils have you stumbled into, Jackdar? We saw your battle with the worm from yonder hill, and then this—Freyr's toots, but you look like hell!"

"Finish it then, Thundar," Jackdar shrugged. "I'm too damned tired to fight." And with that, he sat down in the dirt, the girl still clinging to him.

"What a hassle! You have a tale to tell, I'd wager!" the other man swore. His two

companions, equally formidable specimens of Jackdar's clan, came up as well, to regard him with reluctant respect. "By the gods, we'll not kill you now—nor ever! You've paid your debt by ridding the world of that thing, and I wager that you've sent others to hell this night—"

"No more wagers," Jackdar replied. "If not for wagers, I'd not be in this state to begin with, with you at my heels for a thousand miles or more—"

The other man laughed a booming laugh. "And you'd not have met this lass frowning upon you now! There's no bad blood between us now, Jackdar—we're tired, and I can see that the hands of strange gods were in your trek, to bring you here for purposes known only to them...Will you come back with us to face the council? We'll tell them of what we've seen here this night, beneath this haunted moon..."

"No," Jackdar grinned, shaking his head. "And I thank you for finishing off that foe, though I'd wounded him sore enough. Two more of his kind have I laid low as well. Strange gods were with me and that's a fact, for it was a talisman of this girl's tribe that saved me from the beast in the city. But I would see these new lands, see the wonders of Dilmun-Kutha of which we've long heard tales, and learn the language of the local folk..."

He turned to look into the deep brown eyes of the woman in the crook of his arm, and she smiled. She pointed at her own chin hesitantly, and said her name.

"Kreetha..."

"Jackdar", he replied, slipping his torn shirt. "Jackdar of the Dan-Aryas."

"Jackr," she replied. She nestled up against him, speaking in her own tongue. "Jackr, the Killer of Giants."

Helping him to his feet, the Dan-Aryas warriors laughed again as he enfolded her in his arms, the two of them melting together in a kiss beneath an accursed moon.

He looked up at that moon and laughed as well. He knew that he would not see far Dilmun alone.

*THE END*



YOU WILL BE DISTURBED



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## Eric Enck's

# "WANTED: DEAD or DEADER"

*Liam Easton was more than a gunfighter. To all that knew him, he was responsible for the bank robbery in Hardwood where he made several people suffer and had killed the Sheriff long before he ever knew what hit him. The Old West was as precarious as it's ever been. The Indians from the north had ceased in their attacks after the last gunfight had taken place. Through Fort Dodge in Kansas, Liam rode upon his horse. In 1870, there was nothing left for him but an anomalous post. He was involved in the massive slaughter of Indian Buffalo and host hill cemetery where the lawful and unlawful alike were buried alongside each other. He had put many who crossed his boots there in doubt. Upon awakening under the desert sun in uncertainty, they died believing.*

Liam lifted his black cowboy hat under the hot burning sun as he stared at the sign nailed to the post describing the town he was entering. He hoped to just go into a tavern and get a few drinks before passing on into the foothills of Kansas. Maybe he'd acquire a dance, but the sign distracted him of those thoughts immediately. The WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE poster, depicted WANTED DEAD OR DEADER. The word ALIVE had been crossed out with charcoal, and Liam could not help but wonder why. After all, Dodge City had been a strange place, and he had only heard of this town vaguely from a transient he had run into before he shot and killed him, taking his money and fleeing. Over the hills to the East, where the desert winds blew tumbleweeds across the valley like knots of broken fingers, Liam could sense something amiss.

The sign was the first discouragement. As he reared his horse to approach the entranceway, the second was his horse itself. It abruptly lunged to a halt.

"What the hell?" Liam said. "Come on you ass!" He kicked the horse again, but the stallion only bucked back and blew a blast from its mouth. The horse would not enter the town. As the sun began to go down in the South, Liam could see the haze of the summer heat from far away, where Indian territory was still vast and alarming, and where the rivers of Dodge city often flowed with their mysterious blood.

*How many of these redskins have you killed? Not enough... it's never enough.*

Liam dismounted and dropped to his snakeskin boots. The spurs spun glistening in the sun, which had become a bloody lantern in the sky. Soon, the moon would replace it, and in this town, if you stared long enough, the moon would become a skull: a symbol of destruction.

*Dead or Deader*

Liam glanced at the sign once more, then turned his attention to tying his horse to the ridge post. He walked into the beginning tail of the town. More tumbleweeds danced in front of him. A few people from the parlor up ahead came into view. Liam was a deadly gunfighter, a killer, and had no qualms about a high noon showdown; of course, high noon would perhaps never come for the people of *Deadfall*. He had heard of this place while in Dodge City, while he and Butch Hutchers robbed the banks and shot the local Sheriff in the face with his own dropped revolver. *Dead Fall* was ten miles away, and he was surprised no one followed him. Butch would've thought the same about this place, but he died along the way. Although this saddened even a hard killer like Liam Easton, he had to move on. Butch was like a brother to him, and they were beyond backing each other up in any fight. Together they would burn if need be. While in Dodge City he had been shot in the back, and drowned in his own blood while escaping on horseback. Liam shot Butch's horse, took what he could use, and headed down the plantations and valleys until he came here: a place to dry and hot that year very throat cracked with yearning for water. His thirst was grand and aliening. Butch would've wanted Liam to continue on his journey, all not for him, then for his wife.

A woman in her late teens, possibly early twenties, came upon the porch to the barbershop, dressed in her formal flowing attire. Liam Easton walked onward towards her, his boots trailing dust. In her hand, she held an umbrella. Liam had seen plenty of women like these in numerous towns, although he upped his hat, and thought it odd that the woman's bright white wooden umbrella was peppered with some unlucky scots blood. So was her dress, so was her face, yet, when the gunfighter passed, she smiled. He did not like her smile to say the least, and he did not like how she stared at his twin guns, or his marrow

handed knife. Perhaps, in this town, he would need these things.

"Howdy ma'am "

"Do I know you?" She asked

"I don't think so." Liam said "I never forget a face, especially not one as pretty as yours."

"What brings you here?"

The gunfighter stopped and turned as the sun went down "Just stopping to get a drink as all."

"You don't want to drink anything here " The woman said. Her umbrella lifted her arm from the wind.

"Why is that?"

"Devil's been pissing in the well "

Liam wanted to laugh, but the way the woman said it, made him instead continue forward. He lifted his hat again.

"I'll take my chances." He said instead.

"I took mine." The lady replied. Suddenly, Liam saw her eyes, and they looked as distant as demons sleeping in some place where corners of minds contained deadly arousal.

Out from the bar stumbled a patron. A small fat man in a derby hat with a half chewed cigar jammed between his pursed lips. His pants were half undone. Even from ten feet away, Liam could smell the booze on his breath.

"WHO ARE YOU?" The drunkard in the derby hat bellowed and burped. Liam could only glimpse at him, his face stretched into a five o'clock shadow smile. The bandana around his neck still smelled of the jerky he had eaten while on the hiking trails, and between that, this miasma from the bar's breath and the hot burning sun, Liam wanted to vomit. He didn't however, only looked around him at the tall taverns, the motel, the only bank in town, the corral, the barn on the other side with no horses, and back to the mortice in front of him.

"Step aside bum," Liam said "I'm not here to make trouble "

"Well " The fat man said "Maybe I have trouble to make: ~~gunfighter~~: what's your name?"

"I have no name to give you " Liam said. "Step aside now or I'll give your customer more business."

"He has enough business " The fat drunk spewed, "It's YOU who will die, right here in this town. You came to get our women didn't you? Well guess what gunfighter with no ~~name~~, our women have something to give you "

Liam Easton pulled his pistol and fired a single bullet dead center into the drunk's forehead. His last thoughts rained on the back of his head and splattered the hot ground, drying almost immediately. The drunkard fell over in his shoes, his face crooked with death and questions still hanging onto his lips. The gun smoke billowed from the gunfighter's revolver. He holstered it, and looked up from under his hat at the dame wearing blood stained clothing. Her eyes seemed distant, away from the graces of what customary women contained. Perhaps he has stumbled upon something dreadful here. Perhaps it was best to get back on his steed and ride as fast as he could out of town, especially if this town's Sheriff got word, or the wind had carried the gunfire to his ears. This town had no Sheriff. This town was dead.

*Dead and alive...*

*Dead and Deader...*

"YOU BASTARD!" Liam heard a voice scream, another woman, this one as fat as what now lay in the dusty road gathering rigor mortis, ventured to the porch of the motel. As she ran, she clutched the bottom of her long flowing skirt in her hands. A flowering hat on her head was cocked to one side. Her face was pudgy but appealing, that was until Liam got a closer look at her, and saw how murky the area around her eyes had become, and how she had blood encrusted thick on her chin.

"You killed my father!" The woman screamed. "You killed a man of God!"

"God's not here " Liam said. His words were low and only for him to hear. He looked up at the woman with the blood-smeared mouth and spoke firmly, "I was just passing through, and your Daddy was in the way."

"In the way?" His daughter screamed. And then, in one horrifying voice, one he had never heard before spoken in Indian speak: "Uganowoto caw a."

"Back at ya darling." The gunfighter said. Walking past the wind, into the tavern across the street ignoring her, Liam Easton took no remorse. He went through the double doors with relative ease. Inside was a massacre.

*Uganowotocawna*

*Walk among the dead.*

The gunfighter stood inside the quiet bar in terror. Beside him lay the Sheriff. His brass badge shining even in the dark of the shadowy tavern made Liam feel grim. The Sheriff's two-gallon hat was filled to the brim with blood. His body lay twisted, hands broken, face mangled by what appeared to be

tooth marks from some wild animal attack. His right foot was torn from his leg and as Liam grimaced from the sight of this, it did not come close to the viscous before hand.

He thought he would be entering a place full of poker players and cheats, drunkards and buffoons. There were over ten cowboys in the tavern, all dead. Two patrons sat locked together as if they were hugging. The top of their heads were off, and their brains gone, as if scooped out by bare hands. Another cowboy lay across the floor with his legs crossed. One boot off, the other on. A bone jutting through his skin suggested a broken ankle, but that didn't concern the gunfighter nearly as much as the man's arms. There were none, just the screaming evidence of white bone underneath. His face was frozen in terror.

Liam walked slowly amid this bloody scene from hell, and saw the bartender sprawled across his own serving area. Blood from his slashed throat ran down the wooden bar in drips, as did his brains. His right eye lay on the bar smashed like a grape. One of the beer mugs still halfway full with brew had a finger floating in it. At the card table nearest the piano, three cowboys sat dead as the day. As night came quicker than Liam had hoped for, he observed something else at the card table. He saw a monstrosity from out of hell sitting among the dead cowboys ravenously chewing on the toes of a human foot. The foot, Liam imagined, belonged to the Sheriff of Dead Falls.

*You learned about them when you were just a little boy, Liam. When you were a ranch hand and your pa told you about the Jaws, the Ugaroscotomans, they walk among the dead, avenging the Indians. People from the North called them Zombies. They were just a fairytale though.*

"What in God's name?"

The thing looked up from its gory feast, just as it tore a hunk of flesh from the arch of the dead Sheriff's foot, and Liam saw its colorless eyes. Its grayish hair was drenched in sweat. Blood stained bangs hung on its greasy forehead. Its face was like all faces passed and spent in the world of Liam's memory, but when the zombie looked up at the gunfighter with a mouth full of flesh and a splinter of bone stuck between its dull teeth, a horror unlike any before hit Liam. He recognized the man immediately. A man that was no longer a man was now a thing.

"Butch?" Liam whispered in horror. "Be God's name in Sam hell. Butch?"

It was Butch Hatcher, and when Butch stood from the card table Liam wanted to tear off running. Butch's eyes had gone over like a funeral without hope, and his color was a pallid gray. His flesh seemed to hang, and Butch smiled at his old friend, before his smile turned narrow. His mouth dropped open, pieces of flesh and tags of bone stuck to his lips, a gutter of gore defined his mouth, as he did not move. Here in the sinister tavern that grew even darker at night, the zombie did not move.

"What's wrong with you Bu-"

Butch changed, arms out, palms open, mouth stretched unbelieved in a lurid scream that seemed inhuman. It sounded like a cross between a mountain lion and a witch that perhaps took the time out of life to vomit razorblades. He saw a bullet hit Butch in the back on their way here. He had left Butch dead on the trail and had shot his horse down. Butch had died in Dodge City.

Butch was coming at him, slowly but with heavy footfalls. A loud groan escaped his lungs, and before Liam pulled his pearl handled six shooter he saw maggots dancing in Butch's hair, a few of them twisting back up into his nose.

The gunfighter fired three shots. Two sank into the dead man's chest, the third went into his forehead, and much like the fat man outside, Butch Hatcher died once again, his body thrown onto the card table knocking whiskey, cards and poker chips across the room.

"I'll kill you again." Liam said. "Are you dead this time?"

Strong words for someone so scared. This gunfighter had never been scared of anything. As light exited the tavern, Liam walked to the other side in silhouette of dead corpses following him. He drew a pack of flat and matches from a leather holder and lit the lantern on the far wall. The tavern had begun to smell like rotting meat baking in the sun, Liam's gorge rose in his throat. He took off his black cowboy hat and wiped his dark brow. Replacing it, he heard a clamor in the corner. Moving the lantern, he observed the organs of the noise, a terrible munching sound, that reminded him of the squirrels on the prairie back home where as a little boy he had grown alert to the sound of them cracking walnuts.

What he saw was no squirrel, and the cracking had been a woman's skull.

In the farthest corner of the tavern, where the lantern light just reached, was another thing like Butch. This one was smaller, and bore no eyes at all. Something had torn them from its face. Unfortunately it still had a mouth, and it was devouring the arm of a woman who lie inert and still in the corner. A pile of her entrails lie out beside her drawing desert flies. Another zombie feasted ravenously on her intestines, grabbing at them as they slipped through its hands like wet ropes. The zombie bit into its own palm twice before it tried the intestines again.

The zombie working on the barter's arm turned towards the light and hissed like a cat. Dark arterial blood ran from its mouth in freshets. It dropped the arm and stood straight, looking at the gunfighter with curious deadened eyes. It swayed back and forth like a drunk before moving forward slowly, and as it walked, its gait was clumsy. Its knees went up and down like pistons and it shuffled forward grinning, arms

out, and proping.

And that's when Liam Easton observed that this one had at least tried to kill itself at one point. Its wrists were slashed open and dry with dust. Perhaps before it had changed, it had sensed the alteration and wanted to kill itself. It screamed when Liam gunned it down.

His gun went into the holster as the other one came out. Before he was aware, the other undead eating the woman's guts was charging fast. Liam shot it once, twice, then it was gone.

*You have to get the hell out of here.* Liam thought. *Something's very wrong in this town.*

Liam exited the tavern. The daylight had now completely vanished. The moon had risen in the sky seemingly faster than the rate Liam had grown used to. One thing became clear as he heard other things moving behind him. The moon did look like a skull. Here in Kansas, here in Deadfall, where someone was wanted dead or doader, no one escaped. Someone was wanted dead... or doader.

That someone was he.

Walking off the porch of the tavern, Liam noticed all was deadly and quiet. The only sounds were sawbloweds bouncing with the steady breeze down the street as if they held the only answer. He would leave town. He had come here just passing by and all he wanted was a drink, maybe a whore. His leather bag was loaded with money he would use to get the Doctors to help his beloved Nora. Nora was suffering from a disease. It started after drinking the well water in Punctown, which was just West of here, and unbeknownst to Liam, his wife was dead but walking like everyone else. Liam turned to head back to his horse. He wasn't aware of what was transpiring, but he had seen enough to fill nightmares for all his years awake on this earth. Turning, Liam decided he'd better run instead.

Standing before him was the fat man he had killed earlier. The moon just above him shone down like a beacon for all evil. The radiant glow illuminated the dried blood on the fat man's face. Liam could see through the hole in his head, yet the fat man stood, smiling.

"OOOOOOOOOOORRRR!" It screamed, while bent slightly forward. Its arms hung loosely between its shoulders, and it wore a gun belt. Only thirty minutes ago, this man smelled of booze. A horrid odor of death and shit expelled from it now.

"You again?" Liam said. "I've had just about enough of you I think."

The zombie belched, a bubble of green slime popping from its lips and running down its dusty shirt and leather vest. It had found its derby hat somehow after Liam had left it spiraling in the dust half shredded from the gun blast. The fat man's eyes were lifeless like the others. In the lower corner of one of them flared a shiny greenish tear.

"Moon." It said. Its voice sounded low and dead. "High moon."

"You want a gunfight." Liam almost laughed. "I'll send you to hell in a hand basket."

Liam took the stance. He observed that the town clock no longer worked, but he knew enough about gunfights to sense the coiling of his own hands. You never walked away saying you lost a gunfight. The only hands were dead ones. He could read it in a man's eyes when they were ready to pull the trigger. The thing in front of him had no eyes, but it had a gun. Its dead hands hung over the air of the revolver handle.

"Draw." It said in a vile grotesque whisper. Blood ran from its lips, dribbling down its throat.

Liam was ready to pull his pistol, he'd blow this feast of maggots away and into the dead of night. His eyes squinted. His dark clothing billowed in the wind, and just before Liam reached quickly for his pistol grip to blow the departed out of its boots, both he and the zombie before him heard a sound coming from across the street. In the window of the funeral parlor, a coffin opened, and arms unfolded. The creeping death that ascended walked right through the glass and onto the street. Liam watched it in awe as it jackknifed its legs up and down like a toddler learning to walk. It moaned and twisted its mouth. The zombie stopped between him and the undead. It stood straight ahead, arms twitching. It was shirtless, and Liam could see where the coroner had sawed the back of its head off and removed the brain to fill it with prairie cotton so the face wouldn't sink in.

The thing turned slowly towards Liam, and laughed a quick throaty choking sound. It lifted its arms and began walking towards the cowboy who fired at its eye. Its right eye blew apart in process, and so did the back of the walking corpse's head. Walls of cotton and formaldehyde splashed upon the moonlit sand as the walking corpse fell over but did not die. The gunfighter threw his lantern at it. The oil lamp broke into burning flames, as the flaming undead stood up and walked in circles. Its arms were still out, its mouth still open. Hungry.

*Hungry.*

*It wants to eat your brains, it wants to eat your thoughts. That way, it can remember how human it used to be.*

The zombie fell into a heaping pile of flames that lit up half the town, and before him stood the fat man again, wailing.

"Draw." It said again as if it could say nothing else.

Liam went fast and drew his six-shooter, emptying all five remaining bullets into the face of the

unkind. It stumbled backward and fell into the flames of the other.

*Together they would burn.*

He watched the flames in his eyes, and an intense interest in learning immediately had seized him. When he spun around to go to his horse, he saw the fat man's daughter standing on the porch of the corral with the others. There were dozens of them, all women, and all walking slowly. Their arms were dangling, some of them were chewing on their own tongues. One had a baby leached to its breast, and the baby suckled blood instead of milk. It looked at the gunfighter curiously.

The woman he had seen earlier with an umbrella came forth as mindless as ever, holding an umbrella in one hand, pulling the hair out of her head with the other. Liam ran towards his horse, the spurs on his snakeskin boots still jangling.

He came to the end of the road, which was the beginning of town, behind him, he could hear the screaming women. Some of them laughing, some of them crying, all of them dead, but walking, dead and deader, hungry for flesh and blood. Here in the Old West, the water was bad. This was the result. The woman had said the devil passed in it.

He could only imagine what was happening to his wife, who wasn't too far away. He didn't realize at the time, even when he looked upon the horse, that his wife was the one who had spread the disease to begin with. Liam slid to a halt, stopping in the dust. His horse was lying on its face in the dirt. Its snout was twisted, tongue hanging out. From underneath the horse, Liam saw three men. They were just like everyone else he had seen in this town, and they were feasting, ravenously tearing the horses' guts out like lions.

Behind him came the horde of the undead, and in front of him came others.

It was at that moment that the gunfighter from a prairie far away realized that even in death there were inferior things. He would not die and come back like them, no matter what the cost. He placed the revolver in his mouth and made one final prayer. It was to his beloved wife whom he'd never see again.

Pulling the trigger was easier than he thought.

In that same instant, Liam Easton thought no more. His brains filled the air between him and his horse where in the morning they would finish drying on the WANTED poster. If he'd looked closer, he would've seen his picture.

Liam Easton, legend of legends now became food under the night sky of a starless night, where the wind blew dust. The zombies came true and fast. Where the devil had passed and where no one was safe under a high moon, the dead became deader.

The dead...became deader...

**THE END**

Looking for that forgotten corner?



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# THE ATLANTÉAN:

## ‘Temple of the Hawk’

BILL CRAIG

*Long before the waves crashed over the mountains of Atlantis, there walked a young warrior who sought fortune and glory. His name was Garan of Atlantis. This is the story of how he became first a warrior and one day a king...*

The wind was bone chilling as it swept down the valley, making his face numb. Garan of Atlantis pulled his cloak tighter about his face, thankful for the woolen tunic and hoiled leather armor he wore for they helped keep him warm as did the dowskin breeches and boots that covered his legs and feet. Leather gloves lined with rabbit fur covered his hands, keeping them warm.

The hillsides were still partially covered with snow, but the fir trees were a deep dark green that contrasted against it. Garan kicked his horse onward, guiding it along the barely visible trail. No man had been along it in recent times, though game seemed to travel it often enough. Already on his journey he had seen many stags and other wildlife. He had taken one stag two days before, butchering it and smoking the extra meat for his packs. Food was plentiful in the wild, but so was danger; be it wild tribesmen or other darker things than often moved across the land.

A few strands of long red hair had escaped from his cloak and whipped across his face in the wind. The rustle of the breeze through the trees sounded almost like faint whisperings and they made him on easy. His emerald green eyes searched the shadows as Garan entered the tree line. It was darker among the trees and the shadows seemed to gather in cold black knots. Garan reached behind him and loosened his sword in the sheath.

The touch of the hilt comforted him as it reminded him that he was a man, not some cowering child afraid of the shadows among the trees. Still, the short hairs on the back of his neck were trying to rise as he felt eyes upon him, watching him. Garan reached up and pulled back his hood, revealing his face. His features were finely chiseled like those of an ancient statue. A faint fuzz of reddish whiskers covered his chin, evidence that he had indeed been on the road many days.



Finally the trail led out of the trees into a large clearing next to the base of a high cliff. A small stream bubbled from a small pool near the base of the cliff and there was plenty of grass for his horse. The sun was still high in the sky as Garan climbed down from his mount and tethered it to a tree near the pool. That way the horse had plenty to eat and drink.

"You can carry me no farther on this stage of the journey, Old Friend," Garan told the horse. It nickered in reply, flattening its ears against its skull and snapping at him. Garan grinned, knowing that the horse was expressing its affection in its own way. Laughing he patted the beast on the rump as he avoided a well-aimed kick.

Garan settled his pack on his back and gazed upward. If the story he had been told was true and the map he had been following the past ten days were accurate, he would find something of great interest farther up the cliff. If the story was wrong and the map a fake, he would likely die on the mountain. Garan walked over to the rock face, his eyes already picking out toe and handholds that would aid him in his quest. Garan of Atlantis began to climb.

The sun was starting to sink below the mountains and shadows were falling around him as he finally reached a ledge large enough to stand on. A chill wind sliced through him as he moved along the ledge, still unable to shake the feeling of being watched. The wind whistled through the rock above him, creating an eerie meaning sound that caused the short hairs on the back of his neck to stand on end. Garan reached up and pulled his sword free. The weight of the razor sharp blade in his reassuring as he moved along the ledge. Eventually it widened, and there he found that which he had been searching for.

Huge stone columns had been carved from the living stone of the mountain as well as a huge door that stood partially open. Garan stood before the door and a shiver raced down his spine. The map was correct. He had found the ancient temple. The Temple of the Hawk!

Rumors had abounded about its location, yet no one had ever been able to find it. The Hawk Goddess was one of the Elder Gods, long vanished from the world. His own people had once worshiped her, but they had fallen from the practice, following new younger gods that promised much but delivered little.

It gave him an odd feeling, standing in the doorway to this ancient temple. Garan dropped his pack and dug inside it, drawing forth both a torch and flint. Closing and retilling his pack once more on his back, Garan used the flint and the blade of his sword to strike a spark and light the torch. Flame billowed from the oil-soaked cloth that he had wrapped around the length of pine wood. The cloth would burn until the pitch caught and then the wood itself would provide fuel. Wind whipped at the flame as he tightened his grip on the hilt of his sword and stepped into the ancient temple.

The light of the torch did little to penetrate the nearly absolute darkness of the interior of the temple. Garan spotted a brazier and walked to it. Cobwebs filled the interior of the temple and drifted in the air, the firelight flashing along their strands in iridescent colors. Liquid filled the brazier and Garan lowered the torch to the liquid which carried the pungent smell of oil. Flame leapt into the air, filling the room with light.

Garan looked around him. Benches lined the room, some of them toppled over while others had just broken with time. Another door stood beyond the benches. Garan started towards it, a sudden chittering sound audible from above him. Garan looked up as a massive black spider bigger than his horse dropped from the ceiling towards him. The young barbarian was as fast as lightning as he dropped the torch and swung his sword upwards with all his might, driving the blade through the spider's shell-like body. Yellow ichor burst from the wound as Garan forced the spider onto it's side, struggling to avoid its thrashing legs. Any one of those legs could poke a hole completely through him if he had not managed to avoid them!

Snarling a curse, Garan tore his blade free and hacked at the creature until it lay scattered in pieces across the room. He had heard of the huge mountain spiders, but until now had never seen one before. He wondered what other denizens of the mountains had decided to call the temple their home.

"Iskhura, protect me as I walk your temple," he prayed as he moved deeper into the cavernous room. What could he expect next? Undead warriors? Skeletons animated through dark magic. Once again he shuddered, fighting the fear that threatened to overwhelm him. The darkness suddenly seemed less deep as Garan entered the main portion of the temple. The room outside had been for mass worship, but the chamber he was now in had been designed for the priest to commune with their god or goddess as the case was. A peaceful feeling stole over Garan as he moved deeper into the room.

A rustling sound came from the shadows and Garan whipped around to face the source of the noise, sword level and ready to meet any threat. A large rat scurried across the floor and Garan breathed a sigh of relief. He spotted another brazier near the door and ignited it as well, bathing the chamber in a warm yellow glow. Shadows stood in stark relief behind the elaborately carved stone columns that rose from floor to ceiling. Garan looked upward, making sure he would not face another of the giant spiders such as the one that had taken up residence in the outer chamber. Stone statues of armored warriors stood in six niches carved out of the walls. Garan slipped his pack from his back and placed it on the ground. Sword in one hand and torch in the other, Garan started forward towards the altar that stood at the front of the chamber.

There were objects atop the altar, though the light wasn't quite bright enough for him to make them out. He was halfway to the altar when he heard a loud scraping noise. Garan spun in time to see three of the stone warriors emerge from their niches in the wall. "Garibol take me for a fool!" Garan swore, calling on the god of fortune. He leaped over a stone bench as one of the warriors took a swing at him with a stone axe. The bench shattered beneath the stone blade. Garan whipped around, swinging his broadsword with both hands. The head of the stone warrior shattered beneath the force of the blow and the first stone warrior crumbled to dust.

A stone fist slammed into his back sending him flying. Garan slammed into the wall and his sword went flying from his hand. He fell to the floor gasping for breath and shaking his head to clear the stars from his vision. Garan looked up and quickly rolled to the side a heartbeat before a stone

blade shattered against the wall where his head had been a moment before. Garan kicked out with all his might and a stone leg broke free, toppling the warrior into a pile of shattered stone.

Garan dived for his sword, rolling across the floor as his hand wrapped around the hilt. He was now closer to the altar, but another of the stone warriors was almost upon him. Garan swung his sword, deflecting the stone blade that had been slashing down at him. He spun inside the blade, using his body weight to send the third warrior crashing into one of the stone columns and shattering against it.

Panting heavily, Garan reached the altar and dropped to his knees before it. From nowhere, a large hawk appeared atop the altar, surrounded by a nearly blinding blue light. "Ishura?" Garan whispered, his eyes wide in awe. The Hawk transformed into a beautiful woman with wings growing out of her back. The mantle of a hawk crowned her head and she looked at him with cool unblinking eyes.

"Who comes to my temple now after all these many years?" she asked in a low, melodic voice.

"I am Garan of Atlantis, Son of Wa'shurn of the Hawkmoon Clan," Garan answered easily enough. He was proud to belong to the Hawkmoon Clan.

"Rise Garan Hawkmoon, son of Atlantis. I am Ishura, the Goddess of the Sky. I welcome you to my temple. What boon do you ask?"

"Only to serve you, Goddess, and to bring your name back to the lips of men," Garan told her. Her gaze riveted him to the spot, and Garan knew she was searching his soul, seeing if indeed he was speaking the truth.

"Rise, Garan Hawkmoon, and take the objects from my altar. Wear them well and use them wisely for you shall now be my champion in the realm of men," Ishura said.

Garan stood and walked to the altar. Across it lay a beautiful curved blade with an ornately carved hilt that was a cross between a dragon and a hawk. A hard wooden sheath lay beside it. Garan picked the blade up, weighing it in his hands. The balance was good. Two metal braces lay beside the sword, each with a polished gemstone set in their center. Garan clamped them onto his wrists and slipped the sword into the sheath and tucked it inside his sword belt.

"Through the braces you can call on me for strength and wisdom in times of need. I will also give you a symbol that will let the people know I still watch over them," Ishura said. Garan felt a tingling sensation and heard a great flapping of wings. A large hawk glided in and landed on his shoulder. "Shakar will be your companion as you journey across the land," she added. Garan gazed into the Hawk's eyes and felt a kinship with the wild hawk. They were much alike.

"I will do my best to bring honor to your name and let the people know that you have not forgotten them, even if they have forgotten you," Garan told her. Ishura smiled and suddenly Garan was back on the valley floor standing near his horse. It was too dark to navigate his way out of the gorge so instead he set about the business of building a fire. Tomorrow would be soon enough to spread the word of Ishura's return.



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have rediscovered  
its secrets?

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to



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PRONOUNCED DEAD... HIS ASSISTANT, MR. CZITO...**



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THE AGENTS GIVE ONE OF TESLA'S MANUSCRIPTS TO A PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE...



AS THE PROFESSOR BEGINS TO READ THE MANUSCRIPT, ITS WORDS SEEM TO BE THOSE OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS AUTHOR...





AND IN THE ELECTRICAL EXHIBITION BUILDING THE GENIUS INVENTOR NIKOLA TESLA DEMONSTRATED HIS LATEST MACHINES BY JUGGLING BALLS OF LIGHTNING AND BATHING HIMSELF IN ONE MILLION VOLTS OF ELECTRIC FIRE!



THAT NIGHT, TESLA PAID  
A VISIT TO MY HOTEL ROOM...

I HAVE SOMETHING I WANT  
TO SHOW YOU/ BUT FIRST  
WE MUST WAIT FOR SOMEONE.

THAT MUST BE  
THE SOMEONE  
NOW!



AND WHEN I OPENED THE DOOR...

PRESIDENT  
CLEVELAND!

WE'LL  
SHAK OUT  
THE BACK  
TOM SAWYER  
STYLE!



BUT WHEN CLEVELAND, TESLA, AND I TRIED TO SLIP OUT THE  
BACK OF THE HOTEL, REPORTERS GEORGE AGE AND LILLIE WEST  
WERE STANDING IN THE LOBBY...

SAY...COULD THAT  
BE...?

WHAT?



TESLA TOOK CLEVELAND AND ME IN A CAB THAT TRAVELED SOUTH OF THE FAIRGROUNDS TO A WAREHOUSE ON THE SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN...

COME WITH ME, GENTLEMEN!

...BUT ADE AND LILLIE HAD FOLLOWED US...

...AND WERE NOW WATCHING OUR EVERY MOVE!

WHEN I STEPPED INSIDE TESLA'S WAREHOUSE, I ENTERED A LABORATORY UNLIKE ANY I HAD EVER SEEN BEFORE...

YOU BOTH KNOW MY ASSISTANT MR. CZITO!

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE,  
TESLA TOOK US TO A  
LARGE, OPEN SPACE...



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# A STRANGE JOURNEY TO LATITUDE 33

## An Investigation into Arcane Science and Hermetic Engineering

Many peculiar events seem to gather specifically around Latitude 33 – a geophysical zone I suspect may be a gateway to a realm mostly hidden from our view of reality.

Some interesting things associated with this latitude are the Roswell crash, at 33.104 degrees; the JFK assassination at 32.78 degrees; and Disneyland, at 33.8118 degrees.

Sesh Heri, author of 'Wonder of The Worlds', believes the geophysical aspects of the Earth have been known by the few for ages and were tapped into by Nikola Tesla in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Heri says planetary features can be formed or manipulated through understanding the geomagnetic principles of the celestial bodies.

In 1980, one man personally experienced Latitude 33 phenomena at Disneyland. At the time, he had no idea that any such phenomena were associated with this legendary theme park, in spite of a lifetime fascination with the place that transcended mere entertainment value.

To optimize the success of Disneyland, Walt Disney consulted experts. With such ventures, location is key, so Disney purchased land for the park based on scientific reasoning. It was recommended to Walt to consult the Stanford Research Institute, known today as SRI International – the same of "remote viewing" fame.

The park was not crowded that day in 1980. Rather than an A-E ticket book, Walter Bosley purchased the unlimited-use passport. Two friends were with him as he rode King Arthur's Carousel just less than two hours before closing time. That was when he experienced Latitude 33 phenomena.

Spinning past Mr.Toad's Wild Ride and Dumbo's Flying Circus, he noticed an old man standing alone, watching the ride. This man had snow-white hair and beard, and wore a black suit, white shirt and no tie. He seemed roughly 70 years old. When the ride was over, Bosley found the old man seated on a bench just beyond the Ten Cups. Unable to explain why to this day, he approached him.

The man said his name was 'Alfred' and he was almost out of tickets. Bosley has never been able to forget the man's wondrous expression. It was as if he was seeing some other world; as if he was charmed and amazed, and a bit confused – but alert and sane. Bosley invited the man to join he and his friends on a ride and Alfred selected 'It's A Small World'.

After the ride, they escorted Alfred back to Fantasyland. Bosley felt compelled to pin his passport ticket to Alfred's lapel. There were still ninety minutes to see and ride the other attractions, and Alfred's face lit up with glee. It felt as if something significant had happened with this very simple generosity.

Bosley would come to believe there was much more to it.

Some may be surprised that SRI was involved with the creation and development of Disneyland. Established in 1946, SRI today serves clients worldwide, from the halls of government agencies to the boardrooms of corporate America. That client list includes all branches of the US military, the Office of Naval Research (of Philadelphia Experiment and the missing Tesla papers fame), and DARPA, among others whom UFO enthusiasts will surely recognize.

When Disney became an SRI client, the firm was hired to help the producer determine the best location for the park, based upon population trends and economic feasibility. SRI assigned two

bright staff members, C.V.Wood and Harrison "Buzz" Price. SRI credits research economist Price's population and spending trends projections as the reason the Disneys selected the 160 acres of orange groves in Anaheim as the site for their new park. But after considering locations in L.A., Orange, Ventura, Riverside and San Bernardino, was there another reason the Anaheim site was selected? There is evidence to suggest that SRI expert C.V.Wood may have known something peculiar about the land itself.

SRI has also developed some of the most advanced technological wonders of the world, including Global Positioning Systems, over-the-horizon-backscatter radar, and Next Generation Weather Radar with facilities operating in the Bahamas, the British West Indies and Caribbean. It is interesting that, according to their website, they have applied their ingenuity to things such as 'envirotechnical' programs. It is also interesting how vaguely encompassing 'alternative analysis' could actually be.

'Envirotechnical' roughly means 'technology of the environment', or 'technology applied to environment'. It could mean both, where SRI is concerned. Through a deeper understanding of the technology of the environment, how could technology be applied to the environment? One way actually fits our incident scenario very well, and the SRI man assigned to lead the Disney project may very well have understood its application.

C.V.Wood was an interesting character. Born in Texas in 1921, Wood was in aerospace manufacturing before SRI. He was so enamored with the Disneyland concept that he was easily hired away by Walt and Ray Disney to become Vice President and General Manager of Disneyland operations. Wood's full-time job was to head up engineering and construction of the Magic Kingdom, and he brought several SRI staffers with him. It was Wood who originated the idea of outside sponsors for park attractions, such as Monsanto's "Inner Space", Atlantic Richfield (ARCO)'s "Astopia" and the G.E. "Carousel of Progress". After a falling out with Walt over a public claim to have been the 'master planner' of Disneyland, Wood's time with the company abruptly ended. He went on to design other amusement parks, brought London Bridge to Arizona, and gained some renown as a master chili chef with auto design genius Carroll Shelby. At his death in 1992, Wood still earned not even a mention in the Disney archives, though he had, indeed, managed and engineered the creation of Walt Disney's idea.

So what is the significance of SRI involvement in the building of Disneyland? Why should we find C.V.Wood's involvement of any interest here?

Consider 'envirotechnology' and its possible effects on dimensional physics. Disneyland, as stated earlier, sits on Latitude 33, specifically 33.8118 degrees. We know that other strange events and places are to be found at this latitude, so we may assume the obvious that the latitude itself – rather, the earth at this latitude – is the common denominator. Latitudes are geophysical in application, and are one element of measurement in navigational positioning. In the case of Disneyland, we have an organization that goes on to become a leading world expert in such things as global positioning systems (GPS) and weather radar. These two engineering disciplines require a deep understanding of geophysical attributes of the Earth, which would include electromagnetic properties of the planet. Thus, now SRI involvement in Disneyland becomes more interesting to our story.

Are there any electromagnetic properties of interest to be found anywhere on the Disneyland property?

As a matter of fact, there are indeed.

Ley lines are believed to be a planetary grid system through which electromagnetic energy pulses between vortices, the power points of the Earth. It has been shown that the preponderance of strange phenomena have been reported where these ley line intersections are known to exist.

In 'Needles of Stone' by Tom Graves, it is suggested that circle stones have bands of alternating charge and energy is derived from the center of the circle and transmitted concentrically outward, to be stored at the perimeter. This energy can be released as desired by inserting a small amount of energy into the relevant center stone. Graves described releasing a pulse of energy that traveled in a

straight line for 6 miles to another stone, and he suggested that ley lines carry energy of various types and plug into patterns of energy at sites, which mark or carry energy flows, similar to acupuncture on a very large scale.

What does all this have to do with Bosley's strange experience at Disneyland back in 1980?

I learned from author and geomorphologist Sesh Heri that energy lines run throughout Southern California. Three of these lines intersect in Anaheim – in the heart of the Magic Kingdom.

So here we have an odd experience at Disneyland, an amusement park built atop the intersection of three ley lines over fifty years ago by engineers from SRI, a firm that has been involved with some of the most advanced scientific and technological research and development relating to geophysical properties, and whose client list includes government organizations with whom they have developed covert psychic programs.

Does it make it more interesting that C.V.Wood had a lifelong interest in psychic phenomena? In the 1970 book "The Psychic World of Peter Hurkos" by Norma Lee Browning (Doubleday), is to be found the foreword written by the very same C.V.Wood. This is evidence that Wood was quite interested in psychic and other strange phenomena.

Was C.V.Wood aware of the geophysical properties under the ground in the orange groves that would become Disneyland? Is this why these 160 acres were recommended in the first place?

Is there any evidence that C.V.Wood applied knowledge of geophysical energy lines coursing beneath the ground through Anaheim to the construction of the Magic Kingdom?

For several years after my encounter with the old man at Disneyland in 1980, I experienced a greater awareness of strange phenomena and their synchronicities. But in 1992 (the year of C.V.Wood's death), I became intrigued with the idea of ley lines. While thumbing through a book, I once more encountered Alfred, the old man from twelve years before. There on the pages within the book was his face– the same slender aged features, same snow-white hair and beard, the same eyes!

The book was about the man credited with first discovering ley lines: Alfred Watkins.

Back in 1921 (Incidentally, the year of C.V.Wood's birth), Alfred Watkins was traveling through rural England when he observed that ancient sites seemed to fall in line, for several miles across the countryside. Watkins theorized that these sites marked ancient trackways across the landscape. He called these straight tracks "ley lines" because the word *ley* often occurred in connection with the alignments. Ley or lee is a Saxon word and means 'meadow' or 'cleared ground' or, in some cases, 'wood'. Watkins walked the lines with a compass, and also photographed them. It was painstaking work, detailed in his book 'The Old Straight Track', first published in 1925. Ridiculed by historians and archaeologists, it would appear one engineer at SRI found such ideas to have merit.

Had C.V.Wood read Watkins' book? Was Wood aware of any alleged ley lines running through California? It would appear likely, when you consider whatever data may have been in the SRI database of geophysical properties of the area in question. Is it possible C.V.Wood, with a lifelong interest in psychic phenomena, would have applied SRI's geophysical data to the construction of Disneyland for the purpose of enhancing the park's success? Or for some other unknown purpose?

And what of that intersection of three ley lines located in the heart of Disneyland? Where does this intersection lie?

Directly beneath King Arthur's Carousel!

What possibly happened to Walter Bosley that night in Disneyland in 1980?

Sesh Heri suggests that the King Arthur Carousel serves a function beyond mere entertainment. According to his theory of geomorphology, a spinning device or energy applied at certain points in the earth sends energy flowing outward through the entire planet, certainly causing an effect in the



immediately surrounding area. This affect can be the possible opening between dimensions, to include time itself or simply another dimension of physical existence. Herl believes King Arthur's Carousel was purposely placed atop the geophysical line intersection to generate a desired affect.

Is this why one gets the feeling of being not quite in the 'real world' while at Disneyland?

Herl suggests that Bosley experienced something inter-dimensional. Possibly Alfred Watkins himself, via a ley line intersection in England in the 1920s, stepped through a vortex and was transported almost sixty years to Disneyland. The Alfred whom Bosley met at Disneyland in 1980 was about 70 years old, and Alfred Watkins was *between 66 and 69 years old* when he was exploring the ley lines in England. This might explain the sense of amazement in Alfred's eyes, if he was transported across sixty years to a Disneyland. Alfred Watkins died in 1935, so he did not live to see the world of 1980 develop. A time slip to Disneyland would have astonished anyone.

Herl also suggests that 'Alfred' could have been a being appearing in the form of Alfred Watkins to lead me to interest in Watkins' work. Folklore includes strange people who display a strong need for something the contactor possesses. When the contactor freely gives over the item, the strange person is very pleased and disappears. Alfred was very pleased when Bosley gave him my passport ticket shortly before we parted.

Greg Bishop, author of "Project Beta" and "Weird California", suggests Bosley may have conjured a tulpa (a being of energy brought to life by the person who experiences it and often visible and experienced by others), and passed some sort of rite of passage in giving the tulpa his ticket. Consider Alfred's black suit, and that so many incidents of inter-dimensional contact have involved people wearing black.

And what of the clues that the engineers of Disneyland were aware of these geophysical properties and their effects on our dimensional experiences?

In 1958, Tony Weald wrote "Skyways and Landmarks" which discusses UFOs using ley lines as means of propulsion and/or navigation. Had C.V.Wood read this book? Is it coincidence that a "Skyway to Tomorrowland" operated for years at Disneyland, consisting of round gondolas with discoid roofs traversing the Magic Kingdom overhead via a straight cable line?

What about the ultra-exclusive restaurant 'Club 33' located demurely near Pirates of the Caribbean in New Orleans Square? Some say it drew its name from freemasonry, but does it actually refer to the latitude of 33 degrees?

Certainly it's possible that SRI was aware of the strangeness connected to this geophysical zone, thus Wood certainly might have.

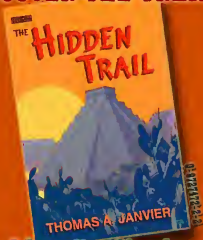
Remember what Tom Graves had to say about energy applied to a center point and how it causes energy to emanate in concentric circles to a perimeter? Remember that Seal Herl claims a spinning device applied at an intersection point causes energy to be generated outward in the same manner?

Disneyland sits in a somewhat round bowl, surrounded by a berm. King Arthur's Carousel spins every day the park is open, directly atop the intersection of three energy lines. Energy generated by the spinning motion of the carousel would emanate outward, throughout the entire park, to the berm itself, where it would be stored. Perhaps this was by design, in order to generate an actual electromagnetic field around Disneyland that has provided that aura of otherworldliness its visitors have experienced while there. And what if that engineering wizardry, also opened the doorway to other magical kingdoms and their inhabitants?

As Bosley learned that night in 1980, be kind to strangers in need, especially if you find yourself somewhere near Latitude 33. You may be 'entertaining angels unawares...'

*By E.A.Garcia*

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# ***A SON OF WESTERN MEN***

*Where shadows clasp and adders gasp  
In caverns deep and black  
Gateways lurk in deepest mark  
And sometimes gape a-crack.*

*Rust-stained stones and ancient bones  
Give testament of hate  
Of those who dwell in twilight hell,  
Behind each hidden Gate.*

*To treasure-plack and try our luck  
We rode the badlands trail  
And scoffed aloud at dusty cloud  
From riders on our tail;*

*When bullets flew we lost a few  
But gave it back in kind;  
An outlaw band in hard demand,  
We left the law behind.*

*The fast we'd break on rattlesnake  
And lizard on a stick  
Just long enough to gulp it rough  
And onward hit the lick.*

*Fast Bob, Reynard, Ginger Slim  
And three-toed Lucky Lou  
Rode fast and hard, my closest pals,  
To see our fortune through.*

*On a high plateau with ancient snow  
We fought the wolf and brave  
And in an unknown valley,  
Those risen from the grave.*

*In a dim ghost town half tumbled-down  
In a cantina serving blood  
We fought for a poke the reptile-folk  
From the age before the Flood.*

*We fed them lead and as they bled  
They cursed in tongues unknown,  
Their leader's life on a bowie knife,  
Their cursed gold our own.*

*We left that hell with whoop and yell  
And pistols barking high  
And hid our stake by a mountain lake  
That touched the crimson sky,*

*But that night in dreams  
the murky gleams  
Of sunken, sodden towers  
Bade us awake and leave the lake  
For fear of Hidden Powers.*

*A pall of gloom, of certain doom  
Had risen o'er our track,  
And half that crew thought it through,  
To take the plunder back.*

*But we talked it down and rode around  
A battle like an upthrust fist;  
Yet in our path was naught but wrath  
And horrors in the mist.*

*On a mountain height, in dead of night  
We lost poor Lucky Lou,  
When downward-swept  
or downward-leapt  
A thing that Fast Bob slew.*

*And a hairy beast  
made a gruesome feast  
Of Ginger Slim and Bob.  
We buried them deep in mangled sleep  
And fought the urge to sob.*

*Back at the lake we found our stake,  
And dug it from its hole—  
To remove the curse,  
to halt things worse,  
Was now our dearest goal.*

*Back to the town a-tumbled down,  
Back to that dirt-caked hell  
We rode in haste across a waste  
Where dried-blood shadows fell.*

*At the dim saloon, beneath the moon  
The serpent-women danced  
With the heads of Lou,  
and Slim, and Bob  
Each set upon a lance.*

*The offered gold they would not hold,  
Nor take it from our hands,  
But hissed their Queen  
would soon be seen:  
The ruler of these lands.*

*An ancient cave was the place to brave,  
So we set off on the task  
To find this Queen of things unclean,  
Our pardon for to ask.*

*The rising moon brought an eerie tune  
From the bowels of the Earth,  
Filled with sorrow, lust and gloom,  
And a melancholy mirth.*

*Our hackles rose; our gun-hands froze  
And Reynard damn-near fainted  
As out of the darkness  
the old bitch rose,  
Her features moonlight-painted.*

*Her perfect face, her sliding grace,  
Her breasts of alabaster  
Gave way to fright at the awful sight  
Of the bulk a-dragging after.*

*With lightning speed  
she struck my steed,  
Snake unlike any other,  
And there was no doubt,  
as my gun barked out,  
That she was the Serpent-Mother.*

*I hit the ground like a scalded hound  
And ran like hell a-fryin'—  
Only once did I dare look 'round  
When Reynard screamed while dyin'.*

*She gulped with force  
my pal and horse,  
And I reckon, his horse too;  
I put my heels against the ground  
And across the plain I flew.*

*So now I wait; from that awful Gate  
Or another of its kind  
I know she'll creep when I finally sleep,  
To swallow soul and mind.*

*For ten long years I've fled those fears;  
Across the seas I've wandered;  
A ship my ride and my place to hide;  
But I know my days are numbered.*

*One night she'll come  
—I won't die numb,  
I weary of the running;  
I'll meet her soon beneath the moon,  
With pistol, sword, and cunning.*

*Her children lurk in worldwide murk;  
Their pale blood still runs thin.  
And I'll make them rue  
that they've dared pursue  
A son of Western Man.*

**WM. MICHAEL MOTT**

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